

可愛い女の子に  
攻略されるのは  
好きですか？

Do you like  
to be captured  
by a cute girl?

[Saiju Amano]

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GA文庫





# Illustrations

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好きですか？

Do you like  
to be captured  
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南条姫沙の裸身は、  
恐ろしくも美しかった。

「ぎゃ」

南条 姫沙 なんじょうきさ

日本の裏社会を牛耳るフィクサー家系の娘で天才策士家。  
帝を手に入れるために「恋愛ゲーム」を持ちかける。



「わたくしが必ずわたくしがすべてを忘れさせてさしあげます。  
わたくしのこと……帝様の好きに使って構いませんから……」

静川 凛花 しずかわりんか

静川財閥の一人娘で、帝の許嫁。大和撫子然とした美少女。  
家同士の都合以上に「自分から希望して帝の婚約者になった」。

北御門 帝 きたみかどみかど

日本の光を担ってきた政治家一家の息子。  
超優秀で将来を展望されているが、  
スキャンダルはご法度で恋愛耐性がない。





「頑張つておねーちゃん！ 応援してるから！  
帝くんが無理のおにーちゃんになったら  
いらぬもんちやないか？」

「なにがなんでも婚約を妨害して、  
北御門さんをおの手に収めてみせる」

南条美月 なんじょうみづき

純沙の妹。ファミレスとスマホゲームが好きな中学生。  
跡取りとしては期待されておらず、自由奔放に振る舞い、  
帝と仲良くなりたいと公言する。



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# Prologue

In the changing room, a young boy and a young girl's eyes met. A tense atmosphere filled their surroundings. Cold sweat ran down the young boy's back like a waterfall. The girl in front of him, Nanjou Kisa, was tremendously beautiful. Her skin was beautifully white and plump, you could almost feel the softness by just looking at her. A slim waist and collarbone transmitted a healthy charm, but she was well-endowed in the places where it counted. Her tender fingers were currently about to push down the skirt she was wearing.

"Kya—"

"Wait wait wait wait!"

As Kisa was about to let out a scream, Kitamikado Mikado frantically stopped her.

"...Wait? Do you really have the right to give me orders, Kitamikado-kun? The Kitamikado-kun who peeked into the girls' changing room to look at a young maiden's naked appearance, ready to take a picture?"

Being told that, Mikado finally remembered that he currently had pointed the camera of his smartphone at Kisa.

"This is not what you're thinking! I was going to enter the boys' changing room while checking my schedule for today!"

Kisa threw a glare at Mikado.

"What a convenient excuse. It really would make it sound like you entered the girls' changing room by mistake."

"It's not an excuse! And I didn't mistake the room! I'm certain that I was about to enter the boys' changing room! I've come here countless times already, so I would know...!"

Mikado was about to take a step back and check the plate next to the

room's door.

"If you move one more step, I'll scream. At 100 decibel."

"100 decibel?!"

That volume rivaled a large jet's noise. Naturally, Mikado's feet came to a stop immediately.

"...Just let me check it for one second."

"No. If you don't want me to scream, then you have to listen to what I say."

"Ugh..."

The boy was in an overwhelmingly unfavorable situation. Mikado grit his teeth.

"This doesn't make any sense...Why are you so calm and collected? Aren't you embarrassed that I'm seeing you half-naked like this?"

Kisa shrugged her shoulders.

"It depends on the person."

"Depends on the person...? So you're fine if it's me?"

As Mikado arrived at that natural conclusion, Kisa's face was colored in a deep red.

"H-Huh?! What kind of logic is that?! Impossible! Aren't you too self-aware?! What's with that excessive confidence?!"

"Well...Sorry."

Although he didn't want to admit it, Mikado had gotten his hopes up a tiny bit. But seeing Kisa's reaction, he immediately apologized. Truth be told, being denied this forcefully would have probably destroyed any normal boy's heart and soul. In response to Mikado's words, Kisa shook her index finger at him.

"The reason I'm so calm...is because this is all part of my plan, yes!

You weren't wrong indeed...to frame you like this, I went to change in the boys' changing room!"

"So you're some pervert!"

"I'm not a pervert! I didn't change here to be seen by the whole male population or anything. Kitamikado Mikado, to set you up, I removed all the male students around this changing room!"

"So you only wanted me to see you naked...like this...?"

"Can you stop with that way of putting it?!" Kisa's tone grew rougher.

But as he thought back on it, Mikado didn't encounter many people in the hallway on the way here. He couldn't grasp how she managed to create such a situation, but considering that it was Nanjou Kisa, it might have very well been possible. The true nature of the Nanjou Family was that of a fixer, and it was in their blood to control the hidden companies of Japan with schemes.

"If you understand, then go and calmly lock the door. I don't want to be interrupted by anybody." Kisa overbearingly demanded.

Like a sheltered and dignified princess, who thinks that the world would move at the snap of her fingers.

"Then you would end up alone in here with me...Are you fine with that?"

"Eh...F-Fine...what do you mean?" Kisa was a bit taken aback.

"You're not worried that I would push you down right then and there, and force you to keep quiet?"

"T-That wouldn't be too..."

"Wouldn't be too...what?" Mikado furrowed his brows.

In response, Kisa frantically waved her hands.

"I-It's nothing! I didn't say anything!"

“You were about to say something just now though?”

Mikado felt like he was about to hear something he couldn't ignore.

“I wasn't! Anyway, I know that Kitamikado-san isn't the type of person to do that. I'm confident that I would be able to show you my naked body, and it still would be fine.”

“I-I see...that's some crazy trust you have there...”

“Y-Yes...so you better be thankful...”

As Kisa fixed her posture with a red face, Mikado was tormented tremendously.

“But I don't believe you, so I'm running away!”

“Noo!”

Kisa panicked and jumped at Mikado's arm, who was about to dash out of the changing room. The girl's softness hit his arm, it was paired with a sweet fragrance that assaulted his brain cells. Able to even feel her breath, Mikado froze up for good this time.





“I won’t let you run away...Until you hear me out, I will not give you permission to leave this room...”

“I can’t help but feel like this is going to end in something

bothersome...How about we just pretend like this didn't happen...?"

"It won't end up like that! I'm embarrassed, you know, so could you just give up on running away?!" Kisa's voice sounded like she honestly was feeling uncomfortable.

"So if I don't give up, you'll cling to me like this forever?"

"Can you stop thinking about stupid things like that!?"

Still, Mikado found himself thinking that it wouldn't be too bad of a choice. After all, being clung to by a Nanjou Kisa clad only in underwear was something you wouldn't experience twice after all.

"A-Anyway, just come over here! I'll scream for real if you try to run away."

"A-Alright..."

Mikado separated from the door, and warily followed Kisa inside the bathroom again.

"...Now then, you're in quite the predicament, aren't you, Kitamikado-kun? Although this might be the boys' changing room, it doesn't change the fact that you were peeking on a girl in the middle of changing...Hence, you're guilty!"

"Oh I am?!"

"Exactly, you are. After all, in the picture, you won't be able to differentiate if it is the boys' or girls' changing room..."

"Picture...?"

A sudden feeling of discomfort assaulted Mikado as he carefully looked around the room. And knowing what he was looking for, he found it immediately...Cameras were hidden in every corner of the room. In the shadow of a locker, on the ceiling, in the gaps between floorboards, past the curtains, Mikado was being watched from every angle imaginable.

Kisa put one finger on her lips, and showed a devilish smile.

“The proof that you were watching me change has been uploaded to the Nanjou Family’s main server...In the one in a million chance that something were to happen, this footage would be shown to the whole world. If it came down to that, I wonder what would happen to your brilliant career...? The one who is going to carry the future of Japan, Kitamikado Mikado-san.”

“.....!”

Blood started dripping from the lip that Mikado’s teeth bit into. The Kitamikado Family is a distinguished family, tracing back to the Meiji Era. Bringing forth many prime ministers, it was a family that was guiding the future of Japan in a different way. Ever since Mikado was born, he was raised to have perfect conduct and high morals, he walked down a path fit for a member of this family. For Mikado, this was an unbelievable scandal, to say the least. He wanted to bow down to his ancestors and apologize. If they told him to cut open his belly to atone for his sins, he would have no other choice but to do it.

“What is your goal...Is it money?” Mikado formed a fist with his hand.

“Money? I don’t want that at all. With all the money the Nanjou Family governs, I could buy a whole country if I felt like it.”

“Then, what? My life?”

“I won’t kill you! I want you to play along with a game of mine.”

“A video game...or a card game...?”

“Neither of those.”

“I’m not playing Foreign Exchange.”

“We’re not playing some money game either...It’s a love game.”

“Love game...?”

Mikado wasn’t familiar with that type of game. Being born in the Kitamikado Family, any sort of contact with love was forbidden for Mikado. Naturally, that included mangas and movies that had love

and relationships as their main theme. He had seen classmates of his play these so-called love games on their smartphones, but he wasn't all too familiar with it.

"And it's not just any love game. The field is present, and there are only two players."

"You and I, huh..."

"Correct. We will both try to make the other fall for us, and the one that loses has to abandon his family, and live as the slave of the winner...We will bet our loves on the line in this love game." With their bodies close enough to touch, Kisa softly whispered.

Her eyes were filled with intellect, radiating a perseverance that Mikado was unable to look away from. Even though she hasn't put on any lip gloss, her lips were as red as blood.

"So you're planning...on crushing the Kitamikado Family...huh?" As Mikado asked, Kisa shrugged.

"Who knows? If you join my game, I'll bury this scandal in the dark. I think that is a way better choice than throwing away the career you have built up until now, but what about it?"

"Give me one second."

Mikado started to use his brain cells at their full potential. Basically, what Kisa wanted was a full-on psychological war. The stakes were immense, but all he had to do was win. Naturally, Kisa would be attacking with all sorts of measures and underhanded tricks, but Mikado knew that he wouldn't be defeated. No, as a member of the distinguished Kitamikado Family, failure wasn't allowed. Breaking down from the tactics of a high school girl would mean that he wouldn't survive in the real world anyway.

"...We need a criterion where we can determine that one has 'fallen for the other'. How about openly expressing affection towards the other person means defeat?"

If that was the case, then Mikado was convinced that he would never say anything out loud.



“Seems reasonable then. We’ll be able to manually check if the words of the other person hold that certain level of affection. A man of justice from the Kitamikado Family won’t be arguing against that, right?”

“Of course not. Though the Nanjou Family might try to talk themselves out of it.”

“How rude. Even the dark side of things has rules. If not, the system would break down.”

“Then, that will be it for this incident...”

“Another thing.” Kisa stopped Mikado mid-sentence. “Let’s make it that demanding the other person spells defeat as well.”

“Demanding...in what way?”

“That should be obvious.”

“If I say ‘Let’s meet up sometime’, you mean?”

“No, not that...Y-You know...demanding...there’s only one thing, right?” Kisa sounded unusually flustered.

“I’m sorry, but I have no idea. If you don’t clearly state the rules, the game won’t start. What other condition do you want to add?”

As Mikado asked with a serious expression, Kisa’s cheeks turned faintly red. Clenching her fist, she glared at the boy.

“I-I’m talking about...perverted stuff...and seeking out the other for that...a rule like that.”

“You mean sex?!”

“What are you screaming at the top of your lungs for?!” Kisa’s face went as red as a tomato.

“Ah...I’m sorry...I was just a bit surprised is all...Does that include kissing?”

“Of course it does! I’ve never even kissed someone before!”

“I see...So I would be asking for your first kiss, huh...?”

“Exactly! That’s why it’s so precious!” Kisa emphasized as she glared at Mikado.

With such beauty, and being the successor of the Nanjou Family, the value of her first time must be immense.

“So, ‘Let me touch you’, is also a no-go?”

“Depends on the situation. Holding hands in an emergency is plausible.”

Since Mikado wanted to clearly mark down the conditions, he continued his questioning.

“What way of touching is no good? In what way can I touch you?”

“U-Uhm...The hands...and the head I guess...”

“So holding hands and patting you on the head is okay?”

“T-That’s...it would make us look like lovers...” Kisa averted her face in embarrassment.

“That really is off, yeah...”

“D-Do you want to experience that, Kitamikado-san...?” She asked as she looked up at him.

“No...”

Of course he wanted to. Honestly, he was more than curious as to what face Kisa would make if he started patting her on the head.

“Ahh, so, as long as it doesn’t make us look like lovers, I can touch you however I want?”

“That sounds like sexual harassment to me!” Kisa got teary-eyed.

“Sorry.”

Mikado could feel the blood rushing to his head. He felt embarrassed.

“And, how about we add another rule. If the loser is being demanded by the winner, we have to answer that affection unconditionally...?”

“Unconditionally...you say?”

Basically, in return for becoming her slave, Mikado could demand Nanjou Kisa’s beautiful body in every way he wished. Though it’s not like he, a member of the Kitamikado Family, would ever give in to such temptations. He would not fall for her allure and charm. But even so, he had to gulp once.

“How about it, Kitamikado-san? Do you want to play this game with me?” Kisa softly whispered.

And Kitamikado Mikado gave a dignified nod.

“...Very well. Although you will be the one ending up as a slave.”

“That’s some admirable confidence there. Even though your fate has already been decided, and you will grovel at my feet, confessing your love to me.”

“I wonder? I’m fairly certain that it will be you, Nanjou.”

The two of them glared at each other.

“Let us create a contract, so that we won’t be able to talk ourselves out of it.”

“Very well. And our blood will be the stamp...”

The two of them finished what could be regarded as a devil’s contract. They took a piece of paper from a memo book, wrote down their conditions, gave their initials, and added the thumb print in blood. Finishing two copies, they stuffed them into their student workbooks.

“There is no going back now.” Kisa narrowed her eyes in a bewitching manner.

“I know that. This will be the end for you, and the Nanjou Family.”

The corners of Mikado’s lips lifted up.

“Fufufufufufu...”

“He he he he...”

Sparks flew between them, as their ominous laughs filled the changing room. This was the moment where the fight between north and south and their fateful love game, began. [1]

Watching Mikado walk down the hallway into the distance, Kisa tightly embraced the student workbook with the contract inside.

“I did it! I pulled it off!”

Unable to maintain her facade, Kisa did a small jump of joy. Just as she had aimed for, Mikado was pulled into the love game she had come up with. To achieve that, she was ready to be seen in the middle of changing like that.

And that wasn’t all.

Calling a beautician to take care that her skin would look especially beautiful today and wearing the cutest underwear she possessed, were all in order to make Mikado’s affection for her even higher. To ward off the manly masses, a trap in the hallway to clear away the people was set. Building up that whole plan took her about two months. No even longer if accounting for the time before she even transferred to Sousei Academy, the school that Mikado was attending. But finally...she managed to stand at the starting line. All that was left was to try and make Mikado fall for her at full force. To make him her slave, both with his body and in his heart. If she achieved that, the days she had always dreamed of would finally be waiting for her.

“I’ll definitely...definitely make you mine...!!!” Kisa muttered as she looked at the picture of Mikado shown on her smartphone.

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[1] Kitamikado is written with the kanji for North, and Nanjou is



written with the kanji for South



# Chapter 1: Civil War

“...A nice morning.” Mikado opened his eyes, lying on his bed.

The morning of the Kitamikado Family starts early, at exactly 5 o'clock. Not a single second too early or too late. In all those years until he had arrived at his second year in high school, Kitamikado Mikado had never used an alarm clock. One could say that he himself was that alarm clock.

Waking up at the exact same time as before, he quickly went over to tend to his personal appearance. Inside Mikado's sleeping room was also a study room, a bathroom and a washing place with a toilet, cut off from the hallway. Everything here was for Mikado's personal use. For the Kitamikado Family, who would never allow themselves to show any weakness to an outsider, even an inappropriate sleeping face was out of the question. This place with diaries and poems was not allowed to be entered by anybody else. Being the successor of one of the five richest families in all of Japan, Mikado took perfect care of his outer appearance. He would neatly clothe himself, properly and carefully wash his face, tidy his hair, and get a final check in with the mirror.

“Alright, it's perfect.”

He was satisfied with his appearance. His features were emitting a severe strictness, not allowing any missteps. His lips, showed a strong will. His body, trained properly to show no neglect. Immaculate black hair, needing no work attended to it. It was the perfect countenance of a man from the Kitamikado Family, showing no shameful attitude towards anyone.

Mikado stepped towards the exit of his room, and softly put the palm of his hand on the door.

“I'm leaving.”

'Fingerprints, voice-print and iris authenticated. Good morning, Kitamikado Mikado-sama. The gate will now be unlocked'

The moment the electronic voice said that, the door opened, and Mikado set foot into the hallway. Boasting over one hundred years of existence, this was the Kitamikado Mainfamily's residence. Hence, the floor was filled with a rich scent of old wood, and the morning sun's rays were entering through the large windows, warming up Mikado's consciousness even further. In the several other rooms lining the hallway, the servants of the Kitamikado Family were already going about their jobs. Spotting Mikado as he walked past them, they all stopped their work, and gave a deep bow. Returning that greeting with a slight nod of his, Mikado continued to walk down the hallway, until he entered a wide, spacious dining room. There, his parents were already seated at the huge table.

"Good morning, Mikado."

The man with a stern look on his face was the head of the Kitamikado Family. Outside of the family, he was acting as the chief secretary of a government party. If he judged one as evil, one would never be able to crawl up in the political world. That showed his immense influence.

"Did you sleep well, Mikado-san?"

The woman sitting across from the head of the family with a smile was the lady of the Kitamikado Family. She was the biological elder sister of the current prime minister. She was of a political family, who could crush political enemies without the slightest problems or fair reasoning.

"Good morning, Father, Mother." Mikado took a seat in front of what other people would call monster parents.

The servants would lift up the covers of the food in front of them on the table, and prepare their breakfast. The dishes lined up next to each other consisted of vegetables with unmilled rice, seaweed, and several sorts of fish, making for the perfect Japanese breakfast. Although it might not look like much for a family of this rank, the ingredients were all of the highest quality.

"Then, the reciting."

Both the lady and Mikado nodded at the head's words.

"Irreproachable conduct, and even if your tail is grabbed, don't let yourself get captured."

"Irreproachable conduct, and even if your tail is grabbed, don't let yourself get captured."

"Irreproachable conduct, and even if your tail is grabbed, don't let yourself get captured."

In the midst of this festive atmosphere, the family tradition was recited. This was the very law that brought the Kitamikado Family to the place it was at now. Finishing that, the time of dining had begun. The head of the family would chew on his rice fifty times, and after sipping down his green tea, he turned over to ask Mikado.

"How is it, Mikado? Is everything going fine at school?"

Mikado returned a soft smile.

"Of course, everything is perfect. No matter the subject, I'm at the top of my class with my grades, my relationship with the teachers is very favorable, and I'm honing my network for when I become a politician after graduating."

"Glad to hear that. Being able to seize hold of the human heart is the key to being a politician after all. But, don't deepen your relationships with women too much. Love and affection is a great weakness. Ever since the old times, romance has not been allowed in the Kitamikado Family."

The lady followed up the head's words.

"You already have a fiance after all, Mikado-san. She is the most beneficial fiance for you when you will stand at the top of Japan. There is no need to be led astray by any short-lived temptations."

The head furrowed his brows.

"That's exactly it. Love is the origin of a scandal, the root of everything evil. Nobody is allowed to gain control over you, the

aspiring light of Japan. There better not be anything that could turn into a scandal, okay?”

“...Of course not!”

Mikado had told the first lie ever in his life. Naturally, that tormented his good heart tremendously. Being assaulted with immense stress, he felt a sharp pain in his stomach, and blood started streaming out of his body. Mikado quickly caught said blood by drinking some hot water, and averted his gaze from his parents.

“Especially the Nanjou Family. They can never grab ahold of our weakness.”

The head added, to which the lady nodded.

“Yeah yeah, I heard that the daughter of the Nanjou Family has been growing to become quite the beauty, so you can’t give in to temptations, Mikado-san.”

“Haha...As if I would let that happen to me...”

Mikado had to pull on his own cheek, after that underwear clad figure of Kisa came flying back into his mind. In the meantime, the head of the family opened his mouth to give a heavy speech.

“Ever since the old days, the Kitamikado Family would act as the guiding light for Japan, while the Nanjou Family pulled the strings in the dark. I don’t know how many times blood has flowed between our families. Be it the fight at Sekigahara, or the more abstract power battle between us. If the Kitamikado Family were to be obliterated, then...”

“...Japan would be wrapped in darkness. I am well aware of that, Father.”

It would not be allowed for Kitamikado Mikado lose to Nanjou Kisa. If Mikado won against Kisa in the love game, he could finally finish the long civil war. The Nanjou Family would find it’s end, and Japan would no doubt be wrapped in eternal light.

The lady wrinkled her nose.

“I cannot explain why the Nanjou daughter would transfer to Mikado-san’s school...but it must be something incredibly dangerous. If it was me, I would feel worried even letting him attend the same school as her...”

“Don’t say that. It is surely a good chance for Mikado to get to know the enemy he will be fighting in the near future. The Nanjou family’s daughter must still be young and unripe, so her embodiment as evil incarnate should not be complete yet...It’s like an immunization.”

The head of the family showed a confident laugh.

*That immunization was way too strong*—muttered Mikado inside his heart. Just yesterday, that dangerous immunization almost spelled the death of him. He didn’t anticipate the event of Kisa using her own body to attack Mikado.

—Well, yesterday I was taken by surprise. Today I’m wary, so it will be different. Mikado was aware of his mission as a man of the Kitamikado Family, and even more so of the antagonism of the Nanjou Family.

Mikado straightened his back, and showed the most confident smile he could muster.

“Worry not. With me, a scandal, or obliteration is not possible. Definitely not.”

“Fufu, that is what I like to hear from the successor of the Kitamikado Family, Mikado-san.”

“Ha ha ha, what a righteous virgin you are.”

The expressions of Mikado’s parents loosened, as their gazes filled with trust. To not betray their expectations, only victory against Kisa was allowed for Mikado.

Mikado entered the second-year 2A’s classroom of Sousei Academy in a state of wariness. Immediately after her transfer, the enemy—Nanjou Kisa, was on the offensive.

From the early morning onwards, she had her hair in perfect

condition and no wrinkles at all in her uniform. The morning sun dimly lit her perfectly arranged facial features, and a dignified stature was the crown of that. However, the glare in her eyes resembled the ones of a hunter, aiming at its prey. The classmates around her were unable to realize that state, and just normally exchanged greetings with her. They definitely had bad eyes.

After all, Mikado could only feel killing intent coming from Nanjou Kisa. So much that you wouldn't expect it from her, after seeing her appearance. And now, said girl stood in front of Mikado's seat, a grin decorating her expression.

"Good morning, Kitamikado-san."

Still sitting in his seat, Mikado gazed at her in silence. He strained every muscle in his body, ready to intercept any sudden attack.

"My word, Kitamikado-san, you don't have to be so scared of me."

"I'm just on my guard."

"There is no need for that though? We are fellow classmates after all."

"I never once thought of you as my classmate."

Before the standing of being classmates, they were enemies of a different family. In response to Mikado's words, Kisa's eyebrows twitched ever so slightly.

"How cruel of you to say that. After seeing me in that state yesterday."

"...Stop with that talk in the classroom."

"Nobody is listening right now. And, what are your impressions from yesterday? Do you want to see more?"

"Of course I don't!"

To be honest, Mikado found himself wanting to see more. Defeat would not be allowed, yet he still couldn't help but feel like he



wanted to see more of Kisa's naked body during this love game.

"After entering the changing room, you looked so entranced by my appearance though?"

"I wasn't entranced or anything! Being shown that was nothing but a bother!"

"B-Bother..." Kisa quickly swallowed her words. And her teeth bit into her lips ever so softly.

"Ah, well..." Mikado felt like he might have said a bit too much there, and regretted his words.

And Kisa continued to glare at Mikado.

"Kitamikado-san, you were the first one that saw me like that, you know?! A bit of thanks would have been very nice of you! So much so that you should actually grovel on the floor and scream out 'Thank you very much for that! I want to be your slave, Kisa-sama. I love you!'"

"What kind of proposition is that!? That would make me lose immediately!"

"Then, what about 'Thank you very much! I will burn this sight into my eyes as I continue to fight!', as you bow down?"

"That sounds like the phrase someone says last to never return back from the battlefield!"

Mikado found himself unable to apologize properly, seeing that Kisa started tearing up. If he wasn't careful, he might say something that could indicate positive affection for her. For example, what if he said 'It wasn't actually a bother, but a blessing for my eyes'? Would that be treated as a sign of affection?

—N-No! It's not like I am thinking that or anything! I didn't think that she was crazy cute, or that I was about to lose my reason back then or something like that!

A dangerous situation, now that he was conscious of it. If he accepted

his true feelings there, he would surely be unable to go against Kisa. And then, the saving grace came from a girl, their fellow classmate.

“I got Kisa-chan’s precious crying face! What a nice expression!”

From the camera the girl held, a flash of light escaped. In that second, Mikado hid his face behind a workbook of his, managing to escape being identifiable on this picture.

One of the secret Kitamikado Family techniques—Ashura’s thousand sheets hiding.

This technique was developed to always completely hide your expression from the paparazzi, no matter the situation. If one were on the level of the head of the family, you could even use the faces of the influential people around you with plates, blankets, and the other, hiding any sights of a secret meeting from the media.

In response to that action, his classmate, Kawaraya Kokage, showed a mighty pout.

“Come on, Mikado-kun! Why are you hiding your face!? I was about to take the perfect shot of Mikado-kun making Kisa-chan cry!”

“You need my approval to take a picture. If you’re that adamant, then take a picture of Nanjou.”

“Same goes for me. If you take a picture without my consent, you have to be prepared for your whole family to disappear.”

“Ehhhhhh?!”

Kawaraya Kokage was glared at from both North and South. However, Mikado already knew that the girl held a certain danger. The Kawaraya Family’s bloodline has a long history of gathering information in the shadows. However, unlike the Nanjou Family that is proficient in using violence from the shadows, the Kawaraya Family’s weapon is information. It was on the level that they are able to sniff out the weak points of people in power. However, their essence is...to bring forth chaos.

They could just happen to lose an important secret message right

after receiving it, sneak into somewhere as an information broker, only to set off nuclear weapons, bringing forth a change of the times by pure chance or rather, not just by chance.

The information of Oda Nobunaga being outnumbered at Honnoji temple was carelessly given to Akechi Mitsuhide, and the ones gaining the most from Nobunaga's death was the Kowaraya Family. Then, they just happened to leak the location of Akechi Mitsuhide to the Toyotomi's, ending his short-lived rule.

For the Kitamikado and Nanjou Family, who had a tendency to work with precise calculations, there was no other family that was more difficult to handle. And, Kokage was the pinnacle of that, striving to reach even higher levels of idiocy in her case.

—I can't allow myself to get cornered...

With his heart being filled with wariness, Mikado gazed over at Kokage. Resting in her eyes was a cunning light. She had slightly pigmented, frizzy hair, and her facial features were overflowing with charm. Her seemingly fragile body quickly jumped back from Kisa, protecting her precious camera, with her well-endowed chest swaying greatly, gathering the gazes of her surroundings.

“And, what did you do to make Kisa-chan cry, Mikado-kun? I feel like I heard the word ‘changing room’ in there~?”

Kokage pushed a new SD card into her camera, and approached Mikado.

—I really can't let down my guard around her!



Although unbeknownst to the other students, tracing the smell of a secret in the brewing, she was on the attack. She might have a cute appearance, but she shows no openings whatsoever. If she were to find out about the incident the day prior, or even the love game as a

whole, Mikado was done for. The information about that scandal might get leaked on the news for all he knew.

And that was not an acceptable end for him.

With the family motto of the Kitamikado's, never giving in even if they grabbed your weakness, he could not allow that scenario to become reality.

“Kawaraya...You don't get to hear anything. And you didn't hear anything, alright?”

Mikado gave Kokage's shoulders an eagle like grip.

“I did hear something though! Like you having a secret conversation, in the middle of the classroom!”

“No, we haven't done something as ridiculous as that...That's just too idiotic...Why would the two at the top of the class, Nanjou and I, do something like that?”

“You're trying to hide it so adamantly...So, it's that, right?! Something happened, didn't it?! Mikado-kun and Kisa-chan, together...in the changing room...?!” Kokage's eyes were sparkling like never before.

—Shit, why is she so sharp!? At this rate, not even the love game, but my life in itself will be game over!

Mikado started to panic as he kept thinking.

“I didn't think I would have to dirty my hands this quickly...” Kisa muttered something very dangerous.

But, Kokage just arrogantly put one hand on her chest, and announced.

“Hehe, my deduction is already complete! Basically, you found some buried treasure in the changing room, and now you're fighting over how to split it up, right?! Mikado-kun says that he wants at least 30%, but Kisa-chan is adamant on getting 90%...!”

“I should be the one crying then!”

“No, I’d really cry if things ended up like that. I only take all or nothing.”

“Are you the sin of greed incarnate?!” Mikado yet again realized how scary the Nanjou Family was.

“So, how do you like my deduction?!”

Not knowing where she even took it out from, Kokage pushed a thin microphone towards Mikado and Kisa.

“Yes, it’s perfect. That’s Kawaraya-san alright...You saw right through us.”

“Nanjou...?”

Mikado furrowed his brows, but Kisa’s glare made him shut up.

“But, rather than some buried treasure, it was actually just a lost item. Though Kitamikado-san already brought it to the teacher’s office, so I sadly can’t show you.”

“Is that so...?”

“Yes, that’s how it is.”

“Weird...It smelt like it was actually something more grave, like it was important enough to influence the future of Japan...Shame...”  
With a grieving sigh, Kokage returned to her seat.

—You hit the bullseye, Kawaraya!

Although Mikado barely managed to survive this encounter, he couldn’t help but admire her sense of smell for this sort of stuff. She saw through the normal looking atmosphere, and felt the fight between light and dark.

After watching Kokage walk off to her seat, Kisa whispered to Mikado.

“Be thankful for this. Having our game end here would be boring, right?”

“I really don’t dislike a boring school life, you know...?”

Mikado’s shoulders dropped in frustration as he muttered that.

It was time for homeroom now. The homeroom teacher standing in front of the teacher’s desk looked over the students in front of him.

“Alright, since this a new term, we’ll be deciding on committee members now. Have you all already decided on something?”

Thus, the classroom got more noisy. At Sousei Academy, the committee member activities are done in pairs of twos, a boy and a girl. Available committees were the broadcasting committee, the public morals committee, the clean-up committee, and several others, but it all depends on luck for who you will get paired with. Naturally, the classmates were hoping for a small breeze of luck, in terms of experiencing youth with a member of the opposite sex during their jobs.

From the seat next to him, Kisa spoke out with a bright smile.

“It’d be great if we ended up as a pair, right, Kitamikado-san?”

“?!” Mikado’s body stiffened up at the sudden declaration of war.

Her words probably implied the following:

*It’d be great if we ended up as a pair (so that I can move the love game in my direction), right, Kitamikado-san?*

Something like that. Definitely.

Since these positions as committee members require paired work, their time together would increase heavily. At the same time, it would result in more chances for Kisa to go on the offensive. Naturally, that would mean more chances for Mikado as well, but now that she shows intent to form a pair, he could not let it get that far.

—Only a fool sets foot in the enemy's field...I have to avoid this at all costs!

Mikado immediately judged that choosing the same committee as Kisa would be too dangerous. The most popular committee was the broadcasting committee, while the least popular ones were the clean-up committee and the library committee. Although he could limit their chances of ending up alone during their work time in the clean-up committee because of the wide area they had to cover, that would also heighten the risk of still pairing up together with her. On the other hand, if he chose the library committee, the boy-girl pairing would definitely end up alone during their work, but if he avoided grouping up with Kisa, Mikado felt he would be on the safer end.

—Seems like I'll be taking the library office.

Mikado judged that, and returned a smile to Kisa. From the moment that she finished her sentence, to when his calculations ended, a mere second had passed. The successor of the Kitamikado Family could not allow himself to lose to the Nanjou Family's scheme.

“What committee are you planning on joining, Kitamikado-san?”

“Hahaha...Let's see, every single committee is very appealing, but I feel that, to emphasize the pride of the Kitamikado Family, I should pick the most worthy one, the broadcasting committee.”

“I see...Then, I will also join the broadcasting committee. Let's both aim to be star announcers.”

“Yeah, let's both do our best.”

“Fufufu...”

“Hahahaha...”

Although they were laughing at each other, a cold atmosphere filled their midst. Counting the several students that raised their hands to apply for a committee, the homeroom teacher wrote down their respective names. And then, it was time.



“Next. Who wants to join the library committee?”

“Me.”

With a calm and collected voice, Mikado lifted his hand straight in the air.

“Meeeeeeeeeeee! Me me me me me!”

A split-second later, a storm of girls followed suit, not quite as calm as Mikado whatsoever.

“What is going on?!” Mikado was astonished.

Joining the library committee brought a rather plain and mundane job with it, and it definitely should not be a popular position. As of right now, Mikado was the only person who raised his hand for this very committee. Even so, the girls in his class were going crazy.

Having been raised under a ban of any romance in his family, Mikado was unable to comprehend the feelings of girls. He was painfully aware of that, but he couldn’t imagine that this was all because of him. Hence, he carefully directed his gaze over at Kisa.

“Is this...some sort of scheme of yours...?”

“T-T-That’s right...”

Forming a fist with her hand, Kisa answered with a strained expression. In response, a shiver ran down Mikado’s spine.

“I don’t get what you’re planning with this...If you wanted to pin me down, there should be no meaning in raising the number of contestants...What are you thinking...?”

“Don’t ask me!”

*Ahh, for crying out loud...!*—Kisa muttered to herself, as she stomped her feet in frustration. In the meantime, the homeroom teacher let out an exasperated sigh.

“Really, you’re way too focussed. Well, it’s not like I don’t get where

you're coming from..."

As the teacher spoke those words, all the girls started fidgeting uncomfortably.

—An ordinary teacher has grasped the situation, while I haven't?!

Mikado received quite the shock. So much that he rocketed up from his chair, and turned his gaze towards those girls.

"Why?! Why do you all want to join the library committee?! Explain it to me, please!" He screamed at the top of his lungs.

Then, the girls all awkwardly averted their gazes as they responded.

"Why...? Well...you know?"

"It's a bit difficult to explain it to you..."

"I kind of don't want you to understand..."

"But that oblivious side is also pretty cute..."

Their answers made Mikado panic even further.

—Cute?! So I, who will eventually stand at the top of Japan, am being treated as a mascot by my fellow classmates?! This is the blunder of a lifetime...!

Driven into madness because of the shock, his vigilance towards Kisa was disregarded for just a short moment. Using that, Kisa looked around the classroom, and announced.

"How cute of you all, wanting to marry into the Kitamikado Family. Just how greedy are you for their fortune?"

"Y-You're wrong!"

"That's not it!"

"It's not about the fortune!"

The noisy female students complained.

“But, I can’t say I dislike that sort of thinking. If you get acquainted with Kitamikado-san, you might be able to gain a favour once he stands above you all.” Nanjou Kisa gave a faint snicker.

However, there was close to no goodwill to be found there. A dark, ominous aura was leaking out of her entire body, immense pressure filled the classroom.

If you don’t put down your hands, the gates of hell will open, you know?

Seemingly having grasped the message behind her actions and gaze, girl after girl slowly lowered her hand. In the end, the only girl that remained with her hand up was Kisa. Mikado’s eyes opened wide.

“Why...After saying all that, you won’t give in yourself?”

“My family is plenty rich on their own, so I don’t need the Kitamikado Family’s fortune. You shouldn’t get any misunderstandings from this, right?” Kisa gave a boastful smile.

““““Not fair!!””””

The girls that had been deceived voiced their complaints. In response, the homeroom teacher scratched his head.

“T-Then, the library committee members will be Kitamikado and Nanjou. You better not start a fight, alright?”

“Naturally.” Kisa nodded, and gazed over at Mikado. “Let’s do our best together, Kitamikado-san (And welcome to my own field).”

“I feel like I heard some inner voice just now?!”

Although he was a mere seventeen years old, Mikado considered seeking out a doctor after this incident, but nothing worthwhile was found.

A single room in the Nanjou Family’s main residence—also known as the space of audition. Be it the main heads of a political family, or a

crime organization, even swindlers and imposters, they all gather here to bring in requests for the head of the family, inside this room unable to be listened into from the outside. On top of that, the visitor has his heart rate, words, expressions, iris, and even fingerprints scanned and recorded, so quite the unfair situation in short.

Even so, these strong personalities in the dark side of Japan come here, prepared to pay large sums of money, wanting to receive the head's knowledge. Today as well, the current head of the Nanjou Family, Nanjou Sai, sat in her leather chair, with a glint in her eye you wouldn't expect from a 99 year old woman. The person sitting across from her was the next suspected head of the Nanjou Family, Kisa.

"And? How is your love game moving along?" Sai asked as she raised one eyebrow.

"There are no signs of Kitamikado-san falling for me. Rather, he seems more scared than anything."

"It's because you lack charm. And sex appeal to boot. Can't you be a bit more aggressive with that Kitamikado brat?"

"We have just started after all. You can expect further progress in the future." Kisa snickered ever so slightly.

"Go at it full force. If you can't capture that brat, the family will choose your little sister as the successor."

Hearing Sai's words, Mizuki raised her voice.

"Eh, seriously?! Then I'll use the family's power to build McDonalds and Joyfull<sup>1</sup> stores all throughout Japan! So that every person in Japan can always jabber on everywhere! So that every person in Japan can go eat wherever, whenever they want!"

Mizuki declared, as she laid on the carpet, focussed on her mobile game. As a second-year in middle school, she was paying around a million yen a month for her gacha.

"So this idiot will succeed the family..."

“We can only let this idiot succeed the family if you were to fail!”

Both Kisa and Sai had lots of things on their mind to complain about.

“I think that the Nanjou Family is sinking lower.”

“You just have to win against the Kitamikado brat. If it’s you, working your head around it won’t be a problem, right?”

Her gaze made you think that answering ‘Impossible’ here would cost you your life. And whilst receiving that intimidation, Kisa just continued.

“...For now, I plan to invest myself into biology and psychology papers, and build up a plan on how to best conquer him.”

“That won’t be enough. Use this as well.”

As Sai rang the doorbell, men dressed in black appeared from the door, put down a suitcase on the floor, and quickly opened the cover. Inside were several hundreds of books.

“This is...?”

“A manga, ‘Flower and Plum’, 10 years worth. Read this, and learn a bit about sex appeal.”

“Will a shoujo manga really end up being resourceful...?”

The old head of the family gave a deep nod at Kisa’s doubtful question.

“Naturally. By reading shoujo manga, you will understand everything about love.”

“Is that so...Shoujo manga are that influential I see.” Kisa muttered as she picked up one of those writings, with all of humanity’s wisdom hidden inside.

Although she had seen this as a form of amusement for the normal folk, her opinion was faulted.

“No need to worry, as long as you don’t fail, the Kitamikado brat will definitely fall for you.”

“I wonder about that.”

“Of course. In the end, love is an emotion, integrated in the genes of man...With someone unreachable for you, that desire grows even stronger. And, both the Kitamikado and Nanjou family have not once crossed paths in that way. The difference in genes is just too great. You know what I’m trying to say, right?”

“...You’re saying that the Kitamikado Family is drawn to us on a genetical level?”

Kisa certainly couldn’t appreciate that conclusion. If that was it, then what difference was there between her as a human, and a normal animal. No, humans are something that act on profound emotions, using their head to think. However, the head just denied Kisa’s wishful thinking.

“Exactly. Putting it in reverse, it means that you as well are charmed by the Kitamikado brat to a certain degree.”

“.....” Kisa’s body froze up.

Shee really didn’t want to base this feeling on her genes. She couldn’t get her eyes off him, she wanted to get his everything into her hands, so intensely that she could barely stand it. However, laying bare this feeling was not an option, in front of the family’s head.

“...Impossible. I have never once in my life been charmed by a man.” Kisa emphasized with a strong tone.

“Is that so? But, don’t you think that the Kitamikado brat isn’t that bad of a catch?”

—He definitely isn’t!

But, Kisa held back those words.

“N-No way. I hate that type of man the most.”

“...I wonder about that? I think that he is an impeccable specimen of a man.”

—That’s exactly right! He’s the perfect, wonderful example of how a man should be!

And yet, she held back those words.

“I am more disgusted by that than anything! J-Just by being close to him, I start feeling sick!”

She faked her expression, faked her words, and exclaimed the false truth.

“Is that so...?” Sai directed her gaze at Kisa, as if she wanted to see through her.

—A-Am I being doubted?

Kisa held her breath as she awaited Sai’s next words. From the depths of her resting gaze, Kisa felt immense pressure. Like a force that pushed you to confess. Just one finger of hers would be able to kill. Unable to stand the situation any longer, Kisa pushed the following words out of her throat.

“The successor of the Kitamikado Family is a boy my age...This is the perfect chance for me to grasp that weakness of theirs. It’s time to end the endless war between North and South.”

“Failure will not be allowed. If you were to fall into their hands...”

The head of the Nanjou family, Sai, threatened with a deep voice.

“Yes. I will use whatever trick I have at my disposal, and make Kitamikado Mikado fall for me.”

The girl announced, as she pressed one of the shoujo manga volumes against her chest.

During library committee work the following day, Kisa and Mikado ended up being made to organize and arrange books. As tension filled his body, Mikado stood in front of the library office, in the hallway.

Next to him, Kisa lined up as she raised her chin. It was the same lovable appearance of hers as always, but fighting spirit was emitted from her shoulders. If he let down his guard once, he felt like he'd immediately lose his soul.

"So we can finally work together. I'm looking forward to it, Kitamikado-san."

"Y-Yeah..."

Receiving Kisa's soft smile, Mikado gave an uncomfortable response. Originally, doing work together with a girl was not something he was used to, naturally. Even more so since it was Kisa of all people. However, all he could think of was staying wary of her.

"Well, when can we finally get inside? I feel like we've waited quite the time here outside already..."

"...Just give me a second."

For today's work, he had already prepared everything. To not let them end up alone, which could stir up a dangerous situation, he had a promise with a fellow library committee member of the class next door to theirs to help them out.

—I don't know what she is plotting, but I won't hand her the reigns that easily...!

Mikado pressed on the smartphone in his pocket. In return, Kisa muttered, as she gazed at the door.

"If this is about the person of the class next door, he can't come."

"...What do you mean?"

"The other committee member from the other class can't come because their condition got worse."

"Their condition got worse...?" Mikado furrowed his brows at Kisa's words.

The same moment, his phone vibrated. He quickly took it out of his



pocket, and gazed at the screen. Shown there was the name of the exact person he had asked to help today.

“Hello? What’s wrong?”

Mikado almost hurriedly pressed the answer button, only to receive a weakened voice from across the call.

*I’m sorry...Kitamikado...I can’t come to the library office...I might be done for...*

“What in the world happened?!”

*Some people in black suits just appeared in the classroom, forcefully taking me with them, and took me away in some really expensive looking car...Haha, where will they take me now...?*

“Abduction?!” Mikado’s heart froze as he glanced over at Kisa. However, she just kept her usual nonchalant smile.

—She’s the devil! Just so that it’ll end up with the two of us, she kidnapped a student!

Mikado held one hand in front of his mouth, and whispered.

“Calm down. I will definitely save you. Where are you now? Are you already out of the school gate?”

*Ah, nah, I don’t need any saving. Just leave me*

“...Huh? Are you being threatened or something?”

*It’s not that. These people in black...are actually all super crazy beauties! When I tried to run away, they held me captive, and I could feel their breasts against my arms...Ahh, you understand, right?! As a fellow boy?!*

“I sure don’t!”

*Anyway, I’m done for! This isn’t betrayal or anything! I can’t go against my manly instincts! Sorry, Kitamikado!*

And thus, the phone call ended.

“You traitor!”

“Pull yourself together, Kitamikado-san. I’ll get scared if someone next to me is screaming at his phone at the top of his lungs.”

Or so she said, but there was a faint glimmer in her eyes. And the origin of that was nothing other than joy.

—How scary, this Nanjou Family! She can even read my plans and preparations?

Mikado grit his teeth.

“Now, Kitamikado-san! Stop any futile resistance, and get inside the library office already! And then fall into my hands, hurry hurry!”

Kisa pulled on Mikado’s arm, into the room. At the same time, something metallic and mechanical fell out of the pocket of Kisa’s skirt, down unto the ground.

“.....”

“.....”

The two stayed in silence for a bit. This metallic object turned out to be a stun gun. If pressed against a body, you could release a strong electrical shock, leaving the other person immobile for a certain amount of time.

“Nanjou...Bringing a weapon inside the library office is not allowed.”

“It doesn’t state that anywhere in our school regulations!”

“Because nobody expects a person to bring a weapon onto school grounds!”

“If it’s not explicitly stated there, then I’m not doing anything forbidden here!”

“That doesn’t mean that it’s okay! This is common sense!”

“If I can’t bring a weapon with me, then they should be adding metal detectors at the school gate!”

“This is Japan, not America! What else do you have?!” Mikado stuck out his hands towards Kisa.

“I-I don’t have anything else! One stun-gun is all I could get!”

“So you don’t have something else stuck up in there?!”

Kisa averted her eyes. Resting her arm on the windowsill, she muttered as she gazed at the beautiful scenery.

“I’ll use my right to remain silent.”

“You don’t have a right like that! Just bring them out! If not, I’ll call the police, and our work today will be cancelled.”

“One or two officers can’t do much against the power of the Nanjou Family!”

“Then I’ll cancel the work without calling the police. I feel like my safety is in danger here, so I’ll go home!”

Sparks were flying between Mikado and Kisa as they argued in the middle of the hallway. If he was attacked head-on, Mikado had the confidence that he could handle a ruffian. However, that would be impossible if he was literally stun-gunned in the back, or worse, by a classmate.

“You know...I really think that people that can’t fulfill their job no matter the circumstances are the worst. You have to do your job as a committee member properly, even if your life is on the line.” Kisa said, as she blinked with her big, round eyes.

“I think that those who are ready to stun-gun their classmate are far worse. Hurry up and hand your other stuff over.” Mikado coldly ordered.

“Then just do a body check for all I care! You would need the guts for that, though. You, with no experience towards love and women?” Kisa puffed out her cheeks.

“Alright then. I’ll do a check.”

A verbal tit for tat. As Mikado approached, Kisa grew flustered.

“Eh, h-hold on, you’re...serious...?”

“You were the one that brought it up, right? I won’t hear any complaints about this.”

“W-Wait, I haven’t prepared myself...!”

“Stay still already.”

Mikado ran his hand into the pocket of Kisa’s skirt. He could feel the silky touch of fabric. Feel the voluptuous feeling of Kisa’s round thighs, right on his palm.

“Mmm...” Kisa’s body twitched.

“D-Don’t make a weird noise like that.”

“It’s because you’ve been touching me all indecently!”

“I did not!”

“Yes you did! You’re definitely thinking about something perverted, right?!”

“I’m not!”

It was a huge lie. He could feel the heat rise to his head.

“A-Accusing me of possessing just to touch a girl, what kind of animal are you!?” Kisa declared with a beet red face.

“Well...seems like I wasn’t accusing you without reason.”

Mikado pulled out his hand from Kisa’s skirt pocket, holding a syringe and adhesive in his hand, which quickly made Kisa stiffen up.

“What is wrong with that? A syringe isn’t a weapon. Every junkie has at least one on them, right!?”

“That’s also a crime! Are you a junkie?!”

“Don’t jest. Anyway, your body check is done with this I presume?”

“Not yet...”

Mikado ran his fingers through Kisa’s hair, because he felt he could see something shining in there, which was not her hair pin. As he did, he felt something hard, hidden amongst her hair.

“D-Don’t play with my hair that much...” Kisa shivered, holding back her embarrassment.

Seeing that, Mikado hurried with his actions. Continuously telling himself to calm down, he pulled out a long, thin object from her hair.

“...I thought so. What is this?”

As he pushed it in front of Kisa’s eyes, she furrowed her beautiful eyebrows.

“...A blowpipe. I was planning on hunting bears on the way home.”

“That’s gotta be a lie! The one being hunted will be me!”

“We do have some huge bears here. Close to the vicinity of the kindergarden.”

“There must have been several people that were eaten by that then!”

“Yes...several of my mothers...”

“You have multiple moms?!”

“Is this fine now?! You keep touching me without any definite proof, and we still haven’t started our work yet to begin with! Keep your sexual harrassment to a passable level!” Kisa glared at Mikado.

“You’re getting angry at me now?! Anyway, I’ll finish it off with this!”

Mikado spotted an unnatural looking thread, hanging out from Kisa’s collar. In response, Kisa took a step back.

“That’s the only thing I can’t allow. If you pull on this, my clothes will all fall down.”

“As if that would happen!” Mikado snapped, and pulled on the string hidden in her clothes.

In the end, he lined up that object, and the others from before, on the ground, and gazed at them. A stun-gun, a syringe, a blow pipe, adhesive, and now a rope.

“...So after you immobilized me with either the blow pipe or the stun-gun, you were going to inject me with sleeping medicine, using the syringe, close off the door with the adhesive to create a sealed-off space, tie me up with the rope, and keep me confined, right?”

“Are you a foreseer or something...?!” Kisa’s eyes opened wide.

Mikado sighed at her words, and picked up all the confiscated items. Though he didn’t know what she was planning after successfully confining him, he guessed that it wouldn’t be anything beneficial for him.

“You don’t have any more weapons, right?”

“Yeah, those were all the ‘weapons’ I have.”

“Seems like I need to do another body check?! ”

“Is it really fine, doing that? A very problematic person is going to cross us in a second.”

Gazing over at the direction that Kisa was pointing at, he spotted Kawaramiya Kokage. She had her usual camera in both hands, looking around to search for her prey.

“Ugh...”

“I personally am not the one to stop you if you’re that keen on sexually harassing me in front of her, but what will everyone else think if a scandal like that gets released?” Kisa had a joyful smile on her lips, to which Mikado grit his teeth.

“Alright then...If you don’t have any more weapons, then it should be fine...”

“Fuuu...So we can finally start our work I see...”

“Who’s fault do you think it is that we’re this late!?”

“It’s my fault for dropping the stun-gun alright. I made the fault of realizing that I was holding onto weapons like these, so I apologize. I’ll make sure to learn from my mistake in the future.”

“Why do I get a bad feeling from your apology...?”

Feeling tired already, Mikado set foot into the library office. What entered his nose was the smell of old books and documents. And unfortunately, the room was completely void of any other human beings. Instead, it was filled with a large number of books, neatly lined up in tall shelves. Behind him, Kisa calmly closed the door.

—So this is...our battlefield.

To be correct, it was just a normal library office you could find anywhere. Although he lessened the danger by confiscating the weapons that Kisa had prepared, he still couldn’t let down his guard completely. From here on out, it was time for the main battle. For the future of the Kitamikado Family, and for Japan’s future all the like, he had to work at full force here. Along with hardening his determination, Mikado turned over to face Kisa.

“Alright then, let’s start organizing the...”

Taking a closer look, he could see that Kisa’s mouth was tightly shut, and her snow white legs were shaking ever so slightly.

“Don’t tell me...you’re nervous?”

“Eh?! A-As if that was the case! I am the hunter, and you are the prey, so it would be weird for me of all people to be nervous, right?! Impossible!” Kisa rattled on in panic.

“...Really?”

“Y-Yes!”

Mikado made a dubious expression, and Kisa took a step back, bumping into the closed door with her back, sending a current through her body. The sight of her as she was slightly shaking, looking up at him, was akin to a terrified small animal.

“Your voice is a bit shaky though?”

“This is my normal voice! Ummm, we’ve been made responsible for the literature, arts, and linguistic shelves, right!?”

Kisa slipped past Mikado, and dashed towards the shelves behind him. Splitting up the work, they started organizing the books. Because the students are just bringing the borrowed books back in a nonchalant manner, the books on the shelves were often just barely in the right order, going from their registered numbers. Doing this kind of work might be simple, but it helped in calming down Mikado nonetheless. As soon they entered this room, the battle would be going at full force. And if he could, he would love to finish things right here, and have Kisa fall for him.

And to achieve that, he had the necessary tools with him. Just like how Kisa had hid things in her pockets during the body check, so did Mikado.

—For now...time to check the most promising spot.

Mikado took a small box out of his pocket. Taking the small spider inside between his fingers, he put it down at Kisa’s feet. It was a plan to protect the frightened Kisa by taking it away from her, showing his manliness. Naturally, he picked a non-poisonous spider. The final problem now was the question of if the successor of the scary Nanjou Family would actually be afraid of a spider like that.

Looking around the shelf, Kisa finally realized the presence of the spider. Her gaze was practically glued to the small enemy at her legs right now.

—So a spider really isn’t enough to scare someone from the Nanjou Family!



It happened the moment Mikado gave up hope in this plan.

“.....! .....?!” Kisa’s body started shaking.

Her eyes opened wide, and she pressed the books in her hand to her chest as she stiffened up. This wasn’t just on the level of being afraid. Those are symptoms of shock.

“H-Hey?! Are you that bad with spiders?!”

“I’m not! There is nothing that the successor of the Nanjou Family is bad with! After all, I will become the existence that will rule over the darkness—”

“Your eyes are dead though?!”

That reaction clearly surpassed Mikado’s expectations. With stiff movements, Kisa took out a switch from her sleeve, and was about to press it.

“F-Fufu...Now that it’s come to this, I will press this switch, and...”

“What switch is that?! Also, you had another weapon?!”

“It’s fine, with this, everything will be solved...I will save all students from their suffering...”

“You’ll save them from the rest of their life as well!”

“No, they will be sent to another world...Yes, the ending will be a new beginning for them...”

“I really don’t know what you’re talking about, but hold on just a second!”

Mikado stole the switch from her hand, picked up the spider, and put it out of the window, setting it free.

—Maybe I should have a bomb defusing commando go through the building later...

As Mikado was thinking that, Kisa sank onto the ground. Her eyes were watery, and she looked at Mikado like she had seen a saint.

“T-Thank you, Kitamikado-san...To save your enemy like this, you really are kind...”

“Ugh...”

A sharp pain ran through Mikado's chest. For one: because Kisa's weakened state shot straight through his heart like a cupid's arrow. For the other reason: the immense burden of having made a girl cry, which greatly contradicted what he had been taught at the Kitamikado Family.

“I-It wasn't that big of a deal...”

“No, that's not true. If it was me, I would have used the other person's fear against them, and only saved them when they were on the brink of collapsing. Naturally, unlike you, I would have prepared the spider myself,” Kisa said, as she shook her head.

“Ughhh...”

Mikado had to press his hand onto his chest, in hopes of suppressing this grave sin that was weighing down on it.

“Really, thank you so much, Kitamikado-san...You are my hero...” Kisa softly announced, as she wiped away the tears on her cheek.

“I'm so sorry!”

Mikado bowed down to Kisa at full force. He seriously wanted her to stop with all this praising.

“Why are you apologizing?” Kisa showed surprise.

“Well...Anyway, I'm sorry...”

Mikado hereby swore not to resort to these sorts of underhanded tricks. It might be right up the Nanjou Family's alley, but for the Kitamikado Family, reigning over the light, this was something they should never use, even as a last resort.

“You sure are weird, Kitamikado-san. But, let me apologize for putting a wrench into our work like this.”

“You didn’t do anything wrong, Nanjou...The one that has to die here is me after all...”

“Why would you have to die? Anyway, I would like to organize those books up there, but I can’t reach it on my own, so could you hold the ladder for me?”

“Y-Yeah.”

Mikado held onto a nearby leg of the ladder, while Kisa climbed up, holding the books in her hands. Midway, she gazed down at Mikado, and showed a fiendish smile. Immediately after, he realized her intentions.

—So that’s your plan!

—That is my plan indeed!

The two of them had suddenly managed to hold a conversation by just glaring at each other. From this position, if Kisa moved up only a bit more, Mikado would be able to see. And naturally, that was referring to her panties. In the Genpei war<sup>2</sup>, long past, it is said that the Nanjou Family sent women in their underwear figures to the battle field, gathering the attention of the enemy forces, and caused the ruin of the Heike Family. Basically, the panties of the Nanjou Family were their greatest weapon, the giant of Tartarus, sending souls to their grave. With just one pair of panties, it proved to be strong enough to decide the future of an entire clan.

—If I were to look at her panties, I would lose this fight...!

That’s what Mikado felt at that moment. Sexual desire, is but one of the many important factors when it comes to romantic feelings. The more one’s sexual lust heightens, the easier it is for one to lose their rational thinking, making them nothing more than an animal. In that sense, panties held infinite ways to attack. Kisa was already cute on her own, but if he were to find her panties in his field of view, her attack power would rise hundred-fold. With just the two of them in

this isolated room, Mikado certainly didn't have confidence that he would retain his reasoning, not to mention properly greeting her the next morning.

"He he he...But, you shouldn't have taken me too lightly, Nanjou. I am already prepared for this."

"Wha—?!"

As Kisa opened her eyes in shock, Mikado pulled out yet another helpful item out of his pocket, an eye mask. Having his sight robbed by pitch black fabric, neither the panties, nor anything else was visible for him. The strongest wall against sexual desire. Even if the whole world was full of panties left right and center, as long as you didn't see them, you couldn't be led astray by them.

"Isn't that a bit unfair?! And also pretty dangerous?!"

"There is no danger here! I'm perfectly holding onto it after all! Also, this eye mask is a custom order! Their light absorption is at 100%! Even if your panties were shining as bright as a supernova, I wouldn't be able to see them...!" Mikado gave out a confident laugh, which was returned by the audible teeth-gritting of Kisa.

And that was to be expected. After all, their strongest weapon was blocked by Aegis, the strongest shield. With this victory, Mikado felt the sharp guilt slowly start to fade away.

"Can't help it then," Kisa sighed. "I'll just finish this off up here and—Kya!"

"Nanjou?! You okay?!"

Being afraid that she might have lost her footing, Mikado took off the eye mask at mach speed. However, what entered his sight was a teasing smile of Kisa, as she looked down at him. And at the same time, he caught a clear view of her panties.

Black. Jet black. With laced lines.



“Grrrrr...!” Mikado took five million damage points and sank down onto the floor.

He desperately tried to hold himself back from panicking as Mikado

cited recent yen courses. Then, Kisa stepped down, and showed a confident smile.

“Oh my, what’s wrong? Did you develop sexual desire for me by seeing my tights?”

“Tights...?”

“Yes, tights that simulate the fabric and looks of panties. Don’t tell me, the son of the Kitamikado Family, has mistaken tights for panties?”

“That’s not...”

Mikado received even more damage. Even if it was tights he was looking at, the second he had mistaken them as panties, they had equal damage parameters as a normal pair of panties. Mikado yet again realized that he could not forgive the Nanjou Family for their dirty tricks.

The two of them lined up next to each other again, and continued with their work. Now, the library office was wrapped in complete silence. All that could be heard was the sound of the books being moved, their footsteps, and the tumult from the courtyard, entering through the opened window. Being engrossed in her work, Kisa bumped into Mikado. Their contact was nothing but a slight touch of shoulders. But that was more than enough to make Mikado feel just how soft a girl’s body is, sending a shiver up his spine.

“Ah...I’m sorry.” Kisa separated from Mikado.

“I-It’s fine...”

Once again, silence filled the room. They acted like nothing happened, but Kisa’s ears started to redden up ever so slightly. Observing that, even Mikado felt a similar change in his own face. And yet, no words were spoken. Still, Mikado didn’t dislike this atmosphere. Even if this was a dangerous situation between people of the Kitamikado and Nanjou Families, right now, they were nothing more than a male and a female classmate.

“Nanjou...do you like reading books?”

Maybe that's why he asked that question without thinking too much.

"Eh...you have interest in my private life?" With sparkling eyes, Kisa looked up at Mikado.

"I guess."

"So basically, you're admitting that you have fallen for me?"

"That's not the case here."

"But, you can't help but want to know more about me, right?" Kisa grinned, as she pushed her face closer to Mikado's.

"You sure get happy about the most ridiculous stuff."

"I'm not happy at all. Yes, not at all. Why would I be happy about the first time that Kitamikado-san has asked me a personal question?"

Mikado felt like he could hear quiet humming from Kisa's direction, and she seemed to be in a good mood all of a sudden.

—She's happy about me asking her personal questions...? So basically, she has fallen for me?! No no, it's too early to deduce that...Nanjou shouldn't be that easy of an enemy...Ah, then maybe!

Maybe he was infected with this happiness, as Mikado felt the muscles in his cheeks relax. Controlling himself, he strained his face again.

"And, what is it now? Do you read, or not? This is just a chat between classmates."

"Well, I do read quite a bit. Like the 'Arsène Lupin' series, or the 'Hannibal Lecter' series, or even Goethe's 'Faust'. During summer vacation a while ago, I read the whole Encyclopedia of 'Frauds of Old and Present between East and West' in one night. Girl strength is pretty amazing, right?"

"What do you mean by girl strength...?"

Mikado thought to himself that this seemed like quite the Nanjou

Family like choice to make.

“And it seems like you really enjoy reading history books, Kitamikado-san.”

“Learning from the past is something essential for someone that will have to think of Japan’s future. But, why do you know about my interests?”

“A while ago, I saw you reading a history book written by Toynbee. And also when you were reading Josephus before.”

“You sure keep a good look out...Don’t tell me, you are in—”

“I’m not interested at all.”

An immediate answer. Like she had anticipated that sort of question in the first place.

“Then why are you so informed about my reading taste...?”

“I have the duty to know every human’s reading taste.”

“That sure is amazing!”

“Yes, and you are but one single existence of those six billion. Don’t think too highly of yourself. Just because you were lured into this love game with me doesn’t mean I think of you as any more special than anyone else. Yes, my interest in you is comparable to the attention I pay to the individual leaf of a tree I pass on the sidewalk. Did you get that?” Kisa had gotten incredibly talkative.

—Eh, maybe she really is interested in me?! That’s totally what this sounds like, right?!

Mikado found himself reading between the lines. Feeling the need to give his brain some fresh air to keep allowing the highest productivity, he took a deep breath. But, knowing that it was just the two of them here made him even more conscious, and made breathing only more difficult. And then, it happened.

Without any indication whatsoever, Kisa went on the attack.



“.....?!”

Mikado was just planning on having a calm, and normal conversation, so he was taken by surprise. Feeling Kisa's hand approach, all alarm systems in his body were screaming. However, Mikado's highly developed danger-sensing system didn't allow a fatal hit, as he dodged. Following that, Kisa's hand slammed against the wall behind him, creating a loud bang.

“What are you planning...?”

Mikado put his wariness level of Kisa on max, and took some distance from her.

—Damn it, I let my guard down because I confiscated all her weapons! I should have anticipated that she knows hand-to-hand combat!

Mikado grit his teeth in regret. Meanwhile, Kisa fixed her ruffled hair, and slowly raised her head. Her eyes, gazing at Mikado, were the eyes of a predator. Her canines, almost pulsated with a lust for blood.

“Kitamikado-san, have you ever heard of a kabe-don...?” Kisa muttered in a deep voice.

“Kabe-don...? A composition of Haydn?”

A classic musical composition started to float up in Mikado's brain. But, Kisa only returned a teasing smile.

“Oh my...you don't even know something fundamental like that, I didn't expect that. Seems like winning the love-game will be an easy feat.”

“Does a terminology like that really exist, I wonder...? I learned about 400 Japanese dictionaries by heart, and I don't remember ever reading about a ‘kabe-don’...”

Truth be told, he wanted to look up that word right now with his smartphone, but his pride wouldn't allow that. And also, Mikado couldn't just take his attention away from Kisa, who was sending

waves of killing intent at him this very moment.

“Japanese dictionaries! Now that makes me laugh.”

“Why are you laughing...”

“What do you understand about life by reading Japanese dictionaries. Do you understand what the people around you think? No I learned around this kabe-don in a much more sophisticated genre of books... They hold the entire wisdom of humanity and the truth of this world.....Shoujo manga!”

“Shoujo manga...you say?!”

Being forced to stay away from anything related to love and relationships, shoujo manga was a genre of literary work that he was never allowed to come in contact with, making it a legendary weapon like the spear of Longinus.

With a confident smile, Kisa laid bare her knowledge.

“And according to this wisdom, a kabe-don is the strongest weapon when it comes to love and relationships. You push the other person against the wall, leaving no room to escape, and finish it off with ‘Become mine’, then you’ll have complete reign over the other person.”

“T-To think that such a strong mind control skill existed...!”

Mikado felt a grave sense of danger. The Kitamikado Family excelled at influencing the public opinion, but that was just for the great masses. Anything concerning singular effective methods against a member of the opposite sex, Mikado did not know.

“Now, Kitamikado-san, prepare yourself. Today will mark the final day of your life as a free human being...Yes, you will become my slave...!”

Kisa kicked off the ground, and danced through the air with her delicate body. With insane speed, she closed their distance in a fragment of a second, and Kisa’s fist flew past Mikado.

“...Ugh!” At the same time, Mikado jumped away.

However, Kisa had already anticipated Mikado’s escape route, and closed in on him even further. Mikado now ran through the library office, with Kisa chasing after him. Only the sounds of a hand ramming against a wall, and their breaths, slowly but steadily getting rougher, were heard in the room.

—Fast...At this rate, I’ll receive that kabe-don eventually...!

Mikado panicked. As the successor of the Kitamikado Family, he could not allow himself to be mind-controlled by one of the Nanjou Family. Otherwise, he wouldn’t be able to face his ancestors, and he would most certainly cut open his stomach to repent.

“Offence is the best defense, huh...!?”

At the same time as Mikado dodged another kabe-don attempt of Kisa, Mikado pushed his body around, and approached Kisa, bringing his palms forward. As someone who is meant to do well in both school and sports, Kitamikado Mikado’s hands quickly flew through the air, as if there was no resistance in the air at all. Cutting through several strands of Kisa’s beautiful hair with the following wind pressure, he rammed his fist against the wall behind her. At the same time of the bang, the wall was slightly carved into, making audible cracks.

But, Kisa wasn’t quite done yet. The immediate second before it came to the kabe-don, she pushed towards Mikado’s chest, slipping past him with a nimble evasion.

—The first one to pull a kabe-don will be the winner here!

At a bit of distance away from each other, they exchanged glares. The calm and soothing atmosphere from before had disappeared elsewhere, and the library office was a full-fledged battlefield at this point.

As her shoulders were going up and down because of her rough breathing, Kisa pushed out the words that broke the silence.

“H-Hooh childish, aren’t...you...Kitamikado-san...?Can you really

call yourself a gentleman, using the advantage of your stronger body against a fumbling, weak girl like me...?”

“Sorry, but if I don’t give it my all, Japan will fall to ruin...So I can’t hold back against the Nanjou Family, even if it’s a girl...”

Kisa mustered up all the strength she had, and pushed her palms forwards. So did Mikado, in order to intercept her. As a result, their hands intertwined. The moment he felt the girl’s softness, something akin to an electric current ran through Mikado’s body.

“Kya?!”

“Wha—?!”

The two of them let out a shriek, and quickly separated. Mikado could feel his head getting hotter by the second. And Kisa’s face was slowly approaching the redness of a tomato.

“L-Let’s stop defending with our hands...it doesn’t seem like...that’s a good idea...”

“Y-Yeah, that fight just now was way too dangerous...”

So that they wouldn’t die of shame before they knew the results, the two of them defined a short rule during this intervention. Mikado took the stance of Ushiwakamaru when he defeated Benkei<sup>3</sup>. Pushing forward his left hand, he lifted up his right, ready to intercept attacks from any point. On top of that, he heightened his senses to the limit, trying to anticipate from where the girl would attack next.

“...You’re playing a battle of stamina I see.” Kisa slipped into the shadow of a bookshelf.

Mikado quickly chased after her, but he lost sight of Kisa.

“Where did she run off to?!”

Mikado frantically looked around his surroundings. Neither a voice, nor footsteps could be heard. Not even the faint sound of breathing. Kisa had completely disappeared without a trace.

—Where did she...What is she plotting...?

As his heart was beating under immense pressure, he carefully retreated. He had a premonition that the next move would spell victory or defeat. In front of him was a large shelf, striking a daunting pose. Will she attack from the left, or from the right? Mikado's thoughts ran wild. However, before Mikado could think any more, Kisa came flying down from 'above'.

“.....?!”

This being completely outside of Mikado's speculations, his reaction was severely delayed. Unable to escape thanks to that deadly delay, Kisa hands were attacking him head-on. Both her hands were slipping past his shoulders, ramming against the wall behind him. Being closed off on both sides, there was no room for him to get away. And forcefully pushing a small statured girl like her was also morally impossible.

“It's checkmate...Now, become mine!”

Desperate to not let him get away, Kisa was clinging to Mikado. Her breathing was more than rough, as she was gasping for air, and her face was beet red as she looked down at him. As her soft body was being pressed against his body, he could almost directly feel two bulges, hitting his chest. On top of that, his brain cells were assaulted by a sweet fragrance, akin to a beautiful flower. Maybe because she jumped onto the ground from that height, Kisa's legs were shaking. No matter who the enemy was, ending up in such a situation with a beauty like Kisa, the destructive force resulting from that would be able to send anyone up to the heavens.

—I can't run away here. Because of a lot of reasons!

Mikado's rational thinking was slowly approaching it's limits. However, once he gives in, and grows conscious of it, that would be the end. Straining his mental strength, he put on a stern expression. Just by doing that, all the calories he had taken in today were being burned at an excessive speed. That was yet another secret technique the Kitamikado Family had developed, to survive in the political world filled with sly foxes—Iron Mask (Kioku ni Gozaimasen).

“A-And? Did you finally fall in love with me? You’re totally charmed by me, aren’t you? Do you not want to...pat me on the head?” Kisa forced herself to ask.

Maybe she was embarrassed about doing this, but her cheeks went ripe red like an apple, and her eyes grew watery.



—I want to hug her so badly!

Mikado desperately tried to hold back the urges that welled up inside him. Also, this wasn't about falling in love with her or whatever. The

current Kitamikado Mikado...had already been charmed by Nanjou Kisa a long time ago. Even before she introduced the love game, she had always been in his eye. However, it would not be acceptable for a boy from the Kitamikado Family to fall in love with a girl from the Nanjou Family. Not to mention that having feelings for the enemy was a great failure of his and anything love-related was prohibited anyway since he was promised a fiance a long time ago.

That's why, Mikado swore to take this love to the grave with him if he had to. Even so, Kisa approached him with the love game. She bet their own futures, as well as the future of their respective families, and Japan as a whole, in this ultimate love game, where the winner would be able to gain everything of the loser's. And now, all Mikado could do was hold back his love struck heart, and have Kisa fall for him, becoming his slave.

"Heh, as if I would fall for you just because of this. So this kabe-don or whatever isn't that great of a mind control trick, I see."

Yet another lie on his side. Being tightly embraced by Kisa like this, Mikado's guard, and mind, was about to crack into pieces.

"H-Hurry up and be charmed by me! You idiot! Fall in love with me!"

In a slightly panicked manner, Kisa hit her head countless times on Mikado's chest.

"H-Haha...whatever you try, it's all for naught...I won't crumble from an attack of this level..."

Once again, a great lie. Every time her small, adorable head hit him, the fragrance of her hair was assaulting his reason, lowering his defenses.

—I want to push her down!!!

He leveled up from the wish to hug her.

Inside this desolated library office, it was just the two of them. A young boy and girl. According to the rules, Kisa was not allowed to complain if he did so. However, at the same time, it would show his desire for her. The game would end, with Mikado's loss, and while he



was being held in Kisa's sweet arms, Japan would be wrapped in darkness.

—That kind of future might not be so bad after all, Mikado found himself thinking, as he quickly moved to push those thoughts out of his head. Once he gave in, it would all be over. Gaining the best women, and the best future is exactly what a man of the Kitamikado Family should strive for.

“...Sorry about this, but I'll be going on the counterattack now!”

“Eh...”

Mikado grabbed Kisa's wrists, turning their positions around, and was now pressing Kisa's back against the wall. Pressing his own hands against the wall now, he brought his face closer to Kisa.

“Kisa...Stop with the futile resistance, and become mine.”

“.....!!!” Kisa's body twitched.

Calling her by her first name was a special trick to increase the shock value. Seeing as Kisa must have taken quite a lot of damage by this, as well as receiving a kabe-don, Mikado hoped that this would be the finishing move. However...

“H-Hmpf...I don't feel anything with that kind of approach...If you want to win my heart over, you have to whisper more aggressive words of love inside my ear,” or so she said, but her ears were bright red.

Averting her eyes to definitely not make eye contact with Mikado, she tightly shut her lips.

—This is...I might actually be able to finish it here?! I have to press on!

To not let this chance slip, Mikado attacked even more.

“Is that so? You sure look pretty red to me. Are you sure your heart isn't beating like crazy right now?”

“T-That’s not the cashe!”

She bit her tongue, which made her blush even further. However, that had dealt an equal amount of damage to Mikado.

—She bit her tongue! That steely-eyed superhuman Kisa did! She’s so embarrassed by being inside my arms, and went ‘Cashe!’

The words that slowly but steadily attacking his reason were echoing in the back of his head. Feeling that this would reach critical levels at this rate, Mikado quickly separated. Kisa sank onto the ground, while Mikado had to take a knee because the damage was too great for him to keep him. Both their faces were burning up at this point.

“A-At this rate, we won’t get any work done...”

“W-What, you’re saying we should take an intermission here...?”

“We can’t help it...Let’s stop today’s game...”

“Well...it would be bad if we didn’t finish our job after all...”

A truce was established for now. Though he didn’t know about Kisa’s leftover mental endurance, since Mikado himself was close to death, he felt glad that it ended here. And now, they had resumed their work, organizing the books yet again. The heat of their bodies had started to cool down, and Mikado was able to move more smoothly now. Like this, the job in the library committee was actually really enjoyable.

Back in middle school, Mikado had entered the student council in order to practice for when he would succeed the family business, which of course didn’t allow any failure there. But doing this here now, without any pressure from the family, felt very refreshing for him.

“Hey...” Kisa muttered, as she pushed a book into the shelf.

“...What?”

Because they were in a truce from their game, Mikado answered without paying too much mind to it.

“...Do you hate the fact that you’re working here together with me in a committee that much...?”

“Eh...?”

Kisa continued to look at the back cover of the book, talking to him without making eye contact.

“I don’t...hate doing this, together with Kitamikado-san...”

“I...”

Mikado held his words. There were so many things he wanted to tell her. So many feelings, they were about to spill out. But, a Kitamikado would never tell a Nanjou about these, even if heaven and earth were reversed.

“...I don’t...hate it. I don’t hate talking with you...In the sense of being classmates, so don’t misinterpret anything.”

“I-I also only meant it as classmates! Of course I did!”

Mikado met Kisa’s incoming glare. Before he could even admire her beauty, Kisa immediately averted her face again. She once again tried to put a book inside the shelf, but she couldn’t quite reach it. Seeing her like this, she was like a normal, feeble girl. Not the successor of the Nanjou Family, controlling everything with shady measures from the darkness, but just a normal classmate. Hence, Mikado quietly took the book, and put it back where it belonged for her.

“Ah.”

Although a short sound of surprise leaked from Kisa’s mouth, she kept quiet, and continued her own work. At the same time, her beautiful skin was red all over. After being taken off-guard by that for a second, Mikado continued himself.

‘It is time to leave the school. All the students that are still present are to make their way home now.’

The school-interior broadcast filled the silence, as Mikado and Kisa both lifted their heads. Before they realized it, the sky outside had

started to be colored in a bitter orange color.

“It’s this late already, huh!?”

“I didn’t realize at all!”

If one thought they were just too focussed on their work, then that certainly wasn’t the case. At the very least, Mikado was constantly watching Kisa’s every move. But anyway, the two of them hurriedly finished their work. They gathered their belongings, and they were about to step out of the room. Outside from the windows on the hallway side, Mikado spotted the figure of Kawaraya Kokage. She was sitting properly on a chair she had brought with her, in the middle of the hallway, holding ready her usual camera. Kisa and Mikado were sticking to the door of the room, whispering to each other.

“Did she catch wind of our game after all...? And now she’s hoping for the big scoop?”

“I don’t think that’s it. Look at that.”

Kisa pointed at the sack next to Kokage, standing on the floor.

“A sack...? And a pretty big one at that...”

Santa Claus would probably need one like that.

“She’s probably thinking that we found some buried treasure here in the library office. And with that information, she is mostly likely going to ask for a share to keep quiet about it.”

“What kind of rip off is that!? Also, she still believes that story?!”

“Women rather prefer their feelings over logic....Although I only believe in my own brain, and nothing more.”

“Yeah, I can totally see that.”

Mikado could imagine that not a lot of girly ingredients were put into Kisa. So much that you’d think she came from the roots of a tree. Kisa bit into the nail of her thumb.

“Now this is troublesome...It would be problematic if she bothered us during our game, so I guess that all I can do is call the workers at home, and make them develop an anesthetic gas...!”

“No need to go that far! It’s your classmate, not a terrorist!”

“Then I’ll take care of this myself. With this anesthesia gun...”

“So you still had a weapon hidden somewhere?! And listen to me, I’m telling you not to use that on a classmate!”

The gun that Kisa snuck out of her uniform was immediately confiscated by Mikado. He could feel Kisa’s faint warmth, still lingering there. Feeling her raw body heat like that made Mikado receive damage yet again.

“Then what should we do?! If you don’t have any other idea, then just keep quiet!” Kisa glared at Mikado.

“That’s simple. Come here.”

“Eh...”

Mikado grabbed the perplexed Kisa’s wrist, and dashed out of the library office.

“Ahhh! You finally came out! Kisa-chan, Mikado-kun, where is the buried treasure—” Kokage jumped up from the chair.

“What are we going to do?!”

“We’re just going to run away, that’s all!”

Mikado pulled Kisa by the hand, and ran in the opposite direction of Kokage. Since he felt too embarrassed to hold her hand, he held on to her sleeve as he led her along. But, Kisa properly followed him. The sound of their footsteps resounded loudly as they dashed down the stairs, paired with their gasps for air. The two of them left the school building at full speed. Slipping past the students that had sports club activities until now, they left the school gate behind them, running down an empty road, with no people around.

Kisa had already let go of Mikado's hand, but still desperately kept chasing after him. Her hair was illuminated by the setting sun, and her skirt was fluttering up and down.

"H-Hold on, Kitamikado-san...D-Don't speed up like that..."

"Ah, sorry. But we're almost safe!"

Mikado carried Kisa's bag for her, which slowed down his speed by quite a bit. It was so heavy that he was a bit perplexed as to what was inside there. However, he didn't have the time to ask, as they just chased after the setting sun.

—Somehow, this is pretty...fun.

Mikado thought, while running away with Kisa. It felt like they were doing something they shouldn't, making his heart beat faster not just because of the physical activity. The other person was part of the family he had to hate the most, and his life was on the line during this love game, but none of that mattered right now.

Time passed on for a bit like this, until their school was in the far distance, and they arrived at a riverbank. Next to the river bank was a small street, and on the other side was a railway. Commuting salary men were stepping on the train, and leaving it, almost creating a sort of shadow play against the setting sun.

"We should be fine coming this far...Doesn't look like Kokage followed us this far." Mikado stopped his feet and looked around.

There was no sight of other people around them, and only the sound of the passing train and the sound of the river flowing past them could be heard.

"Haaa...Haaaa..." Kisa put her hands on her knees, and took some deep breaths.

Her beautiful hair was ruffled, and the ribbon on her uniform had gotten a bit loose in the process of running away. The sweat on her breathtaking skin looked like small pearls, and she was akin to a goddess that had just finished her bath.

“R-Really...Don’t make me do any crazy physical labour like that... I’m not used to that...”

“So anything mental work related is your forte? I’d advise you to do some sport once in a while, otherwise your head will suffer from it.”

“It won’t, I tell you. My head is number one in Japan after all.” Kisa puffed out her cheeks, as she got her bag handed to by Mikado.

“I have to call my chauffeurs, they’re probably waiting at the school gate.”

“I came via train today, so I’m fine...but it’d be better if we aren’t seen together.”

“Y-Yeah...let’s split up here.”

Though Mikado felt slightly reluctant to part, it would be a bit bothersome if the chauffeurs of the Kitamikado Family met Kisa like this. His parents weren’t aware of the love game after all, and if they found out about their own son spending time with the enemy’s daughter for a longer period of time, he’d never hear the end of it.

“I did pull back for today...But I won’t hold back tomorrow, okay?” Kisa tightly grasped her school bag.

“Y-Yeah, same here.”

That was all the fun they could have. After this, the game would restart yet again.

“...Then, see you. You can look forward to tomorrow.”

“...Yeah, see you. And, I definitely won’t lose against you.”

After separating from Mikado, Kisa hurried to a road alongside a long line of trees. Being wrapped in the shadows of said trees as she crouched down, she pushed one hand onto her chest.

—I-I thought my heart was going to stop...

It wasn’t because they were running away from Kokage. Even before

that, when it was just the two of them in the library office, she was so nervous she could barely think straight. To calm herself down, she lightly tapped her burning hot cheeks with her hands. But, her hands were so hot that it didn't help at all.

“Being alone with him is that dangerous, huh...”

Her chastity, and even more so, her heart in general. Just by being together with him, her brain felt like it was turning into mush, and it was a lot of trouble to keep the cool beauty act up.

“Are you okay? Are you feeling unwell?”

A passing woman called out to Kisa in a worried manner.

“I-I'm fine! I was just feeling a bit sick!”

Kisa hurriedly got up, and ran away from that spot. Cutting through the assaulting wind on whilst running, she felt herself cool down a bit. Even though the love game was introduced from her side, and even though she thought up a mountain of strategies for this, Kisa felt it was more like she was being toyed around with by Mikado.

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1 Seems to be some sort of Japanese restaurant.

2 1180-1185: War between the Genji and the Heike > Genpei

3 Minamoto no Yoshitsune vs Musashibô Benkei, around the 12th century





# Chapter 2: Mental Manipulation

“...My head hurts.”

Nanjou Kisa's morning starts barely in time at 6 o'clock. Stopping the alarm clock in a reproachful manner, she descended from her bed, albeit not very ladylike. Wobbling towards the window on unsteady feet, she used the rising sun as a way to forcefully pull her out of her slumber. For her own health and skin, she tried not to stay awake too long, but as someone from the Nanjou Family, active at night, she couldn't help but be bad with the mornings.

As she was still sunbathing, memories from the day prior floated up inside her head. Spending time with Mikado inside the library office, receiving a kabe-don from him and the ensuing words that were softly whispered into her ear.

‘Kisa...Stop with the futile resistance, and become mine.’

His voice resounded in her eardrums, as she threw herself on the bed.

“Ahhh, for crying out loud...Kitamikado-san, that's unfair...” Kisa was writhing in agony as she rolled around on her bed.

The more she remembered that, the more the temperature of her body rose. At this rate, she might as well collapse from a high fever, so she forcefully banned every thought revolving around Mikado from her head. Since she took her time in getting up, she couldn't relax now and had to rush as well.

Taking off her long, black one piece that acted as her sleeping garment, she slipped into the skirt of her school uniform. Sitting on the side of the bed, she lowered her long, slender legs into her usual black tights. As the rustling sound of the clothes reverberated, she put on her blouse. After that was finished, she headed to the small washing space in her own room, to splash water on her face. Putting on light makeup and body lotion, as well as sunscreen to protect against the burning sun, her body was in top-shape. Whilst tending to her hair with an ivory brush, she painted her lips with some red lip

gloss. Last was the ribbon on her uniform, and she fixed it until it sit perfectly.

It might seem as if she was going on a date later that day, but today was a normal weekday. This was her usual morning. If Mikado saw her not in her cutest form, she might as well keel over and die.

“Morning, Onee-chan. So you’re awake already~”

Heaving a long yawn, Mizuki entered Kisa’s room. Unlike Kisa, she had yet to finish preparing her outer appearance, and was still in her lax pyjamas. Although she was still a second year in middle school and her chest wasn’t comparable to Kisa’s, the fact that they were growing immensely as of recently was probably thanks to the Nanjou blood inside her.

“Good morning. Go and finish attending to yourself.”

“It’s fine~ I’ll finish it right before we leave.”

Mizuki laid down on Kisa’s bed as she said that. She was the type of little sister that would visit her older sister purely whim like this.

“Also, Onee-chan, you’re really putting a lot of effort into this. Is there a boy you like at school or something?”

“Li—”

Kisa felt her heart almost leap out of her chest at Mizuki’s nonchalant question. Not turning around towards Mizuki’s direction, Kisa answered, her gaze fixated on the mirror.

“A-As if I have someone like that! You know that bet, right!? About the fact that I’m currently in a love game, fighting with the successor of the Kitamikado Family? I’m preparing for that! Battle preparation!”

She could see herself how much redder her face had grown just by watching in the mirror.

“Is that so~? So the reason you have this many pictures of him is also because of that?”

“?!”

Frantically turning around, Kisa spotted Mizuki lying on her bed, playing with Kisa’s smartphone.

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa?!”

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa?!”

As Kisa let out a shriek of panic, Mizuki jumped up from the bed, screaming equally loudly. Quickly snatching her smartphone back from Mizuki, Kisa hid it inside her chest.

“W-W-W-W-What are you doing?!”

“Well, I just thought that you sure had a lot of pictures of Mikado-kun. Do you like him, Onee-chan?” Mizuki asked, without any bad intentions whatsoever.

Without knowing how much of a dangerous question that truthfully was. Having her heart stolen by the son of the Kitamikado Family was unforgivable for the daughter of the Nanjou Family. This love game had the goal of making the Kitamikado Family fall into their hands, which naturally put a certain risk on the Nanjou Family as well, but they couldn’t find any other method.

“Hey, hey, tell me. Did you fall in love with Mikado-kun?” The little sister poked her older sister in a teasing manner.

“H-Huh?! I-Impossible! This is just...I have to keep these pictures in case I need to hire an assassin for him!”

“Do you really need hundreds of pictures for that?”

“Of course I do! The face can totally change depending on the weather, timezone, or place! Every single moment is essential!”

“Alright then, I’ll delete all of them besides one!”

“What do you mean by ‘Alright then’?! Should I organize a one-way diving trip down Tokyo Bay?!” Kisa desperately protected her smartphone from the teasing Mizuki.

Although this might totally be her little sister joking, actually pulling off things like that is what made Mizuki so scary.

“Onee-chan, you’re way too frantic. You gotta be in love with Mikado-kun, right~?” Mizuki giggled as she watched Kisa’s reaction.

“I’m telling you, you’re wrong! Kitamikado-san is my enemy, nothing more! The one I will be making into my slave!”

“If you do that, will you do perverted stuff with him every night?”

“Excuse me?!” Kisa let out a scream at Mizuki’s sudden question.

“I mean, Mikado-kun will join the Nanjou Family as your husband then, right? Of course you’d do perverted stuff. Lots, right?” Mizuki’s eyes were sparkling as she pushed her hands into the bed, turning towards Kisa.

So pure, with no ill intentions. No idea that she was exposing all the embarrassing ideas that would plague her older sister.

“W-W-W-W-W-W-We won’t...”

Seeing the faltering response of Kisa, Mizuki tilted her head in confusion.

“Ehhh, why? It would be truly beneficial if the excellent blood of the Kitamikado Family were to find its way into the Nanjou Family—is what Obaa-chan said!”

The Kitamikado and Nanjou Families moved to the top of Japan on the side of light and dark. That resulted in a relationship between rivals, as well as a high evaluation of each other’s strength and skill. That explains why the current head would want to squash the enemy, and assimilate their blood into their bloodline. As Kisa felt steam rising up from her head, she nervously fidgeted with her fingers.

“W-Well...If Kitamikado-san were to weepingly ask for it, I might think about it...Only out of sympathy of course! Me actively demanding for Kitamikado-san is unthinkable...”

“Then I’ll do it! I’ll do lots of perverted stuff with Mikado-kun!”

“You can’t!”

Mizuki stole the smartphone yet again, and Kisa chased after her with tears in her eyes. Barely being able to take it back at the expense of a few years of life, Kisa banned Mizuki from her room. Locking the door to her room several times, she finally achieved a bit of peace, and sank down on the corner of her bed. Be it outside, or in her own ranks, she had enemies, she could not let down her guard even once. But, to finally get her beloved Mikado into her hands, that was all worth it.

“...It’s me. It’s time to carry out that project I was talking about.”

—You better prepare yourself, muttered Kisa in her heart.

Naturally, Mikado had no way of knowing what happened behind the scenes at the Nanjou Family. No, rather he was trembling in fear wondering about what kinds of attacks will come raining down on him today, in this love game with Kisa. The previously peaceful classroom is now a battlefield. Even in his own seat, he could not relax for a second. Maybe it was because he was worn out of the daily battles, but he actually happened to fall asleep during his ride home.

“Good morning, Kitamikado-san.”

As Mikado was waiting on his desk for the chime to ring, Kisa came to greet him. As always, her appearance showed perfect tending, not a single weak spot in sight. Her appearance was always ready to be photographed for a fashion magazine.

“...Morning.” Mikado returned a rather stiff greeting.

He was happy that Kisa came to greet him, but ever since the love game started, he had to be aware of her every move. Kisa behind her own desk, readied her work-books and notebook, and put down her bag next to said desk. Pressing down her skirt, she gracefully took a seat, and a slight sigh left her beautiful lips. Her movements were almost a work of art. No wasted energy to be found, like it was all one ongoing action, Mikado couldn’t take his eyes away.

“That reminds me...Nanjou, ever since you transferred here, you were always in the seat next to mine, right?”

“Y-Yes, that’s correct. What a coincidence.” Kisa smiled at Mikado.

“...Is it really?”

“Are you implying that I influenced the lottery to get the seat next to you? Isn’t that a bit too much excessive self-confidence you have there, I wonder!?” Kisa rattled on, as her ears went red.

Hearing Kisa call it excessive self-confidence, Mikado himself grew flustered.

“No, that’s not what I was...”

“D-Don’t accuse me of something weird like that! Really...” Kisa pouted with her lips, as she took out a book from her bag, and started reading it.

Her gaze was glued on the book in front of her, not once glancing over at Mikado.

—She’s not going to attack me yet...?

Mikado didn’t let his guard down just yet, as she was wary of Kisa’s actions. The girl, with her straight posture, as she flipped through the pages was beautiful. Both her thin waist and thighs, as well as the shadow it produced, were akin to a work of art. Her gesture as she slightly pushed back the strands of her hair behind her ear had enough sex appeal to inflict damage on Mikado.

Giving off the same sight every day, there is no way that Mikado’s interest in her wouldn’t grow. Her slight mannerisms when embarrassed and panicked had played with his heart ever since she transferred here.

And now, a boy from his class called out to Mikado as he was inspecting Kisa.

“Hey hey, why are you staring at Nanjou like that? Your eyes are scary, you know?”

“No deeper meaning for that.” Mikado gave a short response.

Receiving continuous mental attacks from Kisa, he would not shake at words like these. His mental endurance had leveled up quite a bit thanks to that, even. In response to his words, the boy slightly tapped Mikado on the shoulder.

“Now now, no need to be shy about it. Nanjou’s crazy cute after all, right?”

“.....”

There was no need to tell Mikado of all people, not after all that. Mikado knew best about Kisa’s charm. However, saying that out loud was not a wise choice. Instead, he remained silent and prepared for the first period of the day.

“Now then, time for me to give you the answer sheets for the test,” the classical literature teacher announced from the teacher’s desk.

Sousei Academy has a lot of teaching staff that take education very enthusiastically, they develop even smaller tests with the difficulty and length of end-term exams. Not to mention that those could take place without any warning, so today, the classroom was filled with agonizing cries. An atmosphere of despair filled their ranks. Besides for one person, who was smiling at Mikado right now.

“Kitamikado-san, how confident are you? How about we do a little competition. The winner is allowed to poke the loser in the eye with their index finger, how about that!?”

“That’s way too dangerous!”

“My, it’ll be fine. You just have to win against me. Then, you can push in my eyeball as much as you want.”

“I don’t have any desire like that at all, though?”

“How kind of you. Or are you just not confident enough?” Kisa snickered.

In the meantime, the teacher called over Mikado.



“...99 points. Not bad.” Mikado muttered to himself as he checked his points.

The classroom got even more noisy. Most of the other students were wandering in the 60 points range, and the upper branch reached their limit at around 80. No matter how irregular and without warning the tests may be, someone from the Kitamikado Family could not allow themselves to show any weakness.

And finally, it was Kisa's turn. Still standing at the teacher's desk, the teacher calmly handed her the sheet.

“This time, you're the top of the year...100 points, that's what I was expecting.”

“There is no way I would be mistaken about something after all.”

Kisa accepted the perfect test as if this result was to be expected, and calmly walked back to her seat between the other ones, like an actor walks through the audience off the stage. She was cool, and she seemed like a different entity.

“Being this cute, and so clever to boot, she really is amazing...” A female student sitting next to Mikado whispered at him.

Gazes of envy were flying at her. However, Kisa didn't mind that at all, as she just calmly sat down again.

“And, Kitamikado-san? How does defeat taste? It's frustrating, right? You're regretting being born right now, aren't you?” Her eyes were sparkling as she asked that.

“Not really.”

“What a poor loser. If it was me, I would be throwing myself out of the window right now! You're frustrated, right? Come on, say it!”

“I really am not.”

Rather, he enjoyed the cute sight of Kisa as she was rejoicing. Also, betting on their respective knowledge, it would always be the Nanjou Family standing on top, as Japan's strongest, so losing in a

competition with grades was something to be expected. On the other hand, the classmates around them grew noisier.

“The two of them sure are on a different level...”

“Like they’re reigning over us.”

“I feel like I can’t get close to them.”

“They sure fit each other...”

Mikado heard voices like that, as his body relaxed a bit on the chair. This was the first time ever that someone said they fit each other. Even this morning, he was spotted as he gazed at Kisa, making today full of failings and him even more enthusiastic than normal.

“I-I wonder...if we do fit... each other?” Kisa hid her face behind the answer sheet, as she softly asked.

Seeing that flustered gesture, a great amount of damage was inflicted on Mikado’s heart.

“How would...I know...?”

Mikado could barely hold on to his crumbling reason. He tried to banish those worldly desires by writing old conjugated forms on his notebook.

Break arrived, and as Mikado was about to shove the material into his desk, a boy from a seat nearby called out to him.

“Kitamikado, you’re working in the library committee with Nanjou, right?”

“...I guess.”

“I see...And, did you kiss already?”

“Huh?!” Mikado couldn’t restrain his voice. “I don’t get your intent with this...What do you mean by that?!”

The boy spoke as he scratched his cheek.

“I mean, you know, being in the same committee, you’d normally kiss, right?”

“What do you mean by normally?!”

Mikado wondered when something like that turned into common sense.

“It’s normal, I tell you. I mean, you at least have to have exchanged your contact information, right?”

“We haven’t…”

“Seriously…I can’t believe you…” The boy shook his head.

“Can’t believe it, huh…” Mikado grew more depressed.

He does want to know Kisa’s contact information, but there was no real chance to ask her. Also, asking her was one thing, but it could be interpreted as showing interest in the other person, which could violate the ‘Desiring the other person will bring defeat’ rule.

“You really are weird, Kitamikado. If I were you, I would get down on my knees to ask for her contact information and so on.”

“Hold on, I won’t kneel down to anybody.”

To preserve the honor and pride of the Kitamikado Family, he could not kneel to anyone.

“And I’m saying that there’s value to be found by doing that. She’s crazy cute after all, and all the boys in class got a thing for her. But since she’s a rich lady, everyone’s acting like chickens and don’t dare to go on the attack.”

“Is that so?”

Mikado had a high evaluation of Kisa’s beautiful appearance, but this was the first time he heard of Kisa being this popular with the boys in class. After all, there normally weren’t many students flocking around her in the first place. And most of the time, they weren’t bringing her up around Mikado, unlike today.

—Hm...? Unlike today...?

Like everyone was praising Kisa back and forth. Thinking like that, Mikado felt a certain sense of discomfort.

“Yeah, seriously. If it’s not someone from a family like yours, they aren’t even worthy of her, I feel like. And come on, you also think that she’s cute, right?” The boy asked in a teasing manner.

“That’s...”

As Mikado was busy deciding on his following words, another boy chimed in.

“Come on now. She’s the only girl that can fight on par with you. Isn’t she perfect for you, Kitamikado?”

“Her style is perfect as well! Don’t you think, Kitamikado?”

“She’s got this charming, yet mysterious aura around her, right, Kitamikado-kun!”

All the other classmates gathered around as well, causing a great ruckus.

—What is going on...? They are dead-set on praising Nanjou today...

Mikado felt a sense of danger, as he looked to his side. Kisa was still focussed on her reading whilst giving Mikado a sidelong glance. Still expressionless, with a gaze as cold as ice. Still like a piece of art, just lending them her ear. She was clearly...waiting for Mikado to praise her.

—So that’s what this is about!

It finally clicked in Mikado’s head. He had wondered why she was so docile this whole morning, but that explained it. Presumably, if he were to praise her here, even a slight bit, she would deduce that as a sign of affection, announcing her win in the love game right then and there. Although he didn’t know how she managed to get all her classmates to pull a stunt like this, he couldn’t allow himself to fall into her trap.

“Even if it kills me...I definitely won’t praise Nanjou...” Mikado announced as he looked around the mass of classmates.

The chime for fourth period rang, and world history class started. During class, no attacks ensued by either his classmates, or Kisa herself. Now, he could relax, if only a tiny bit. Naturally, the successor of the Kitamikado Family would not falter from external pressure, but it would certainly wear down his mental endurance. That’s why class was the perfect time to regain his strength.

The grim teacher currently gave a lecture, with a book in hand.

“Like this, Cleopatra became an existence strong enough to influence history just because of her intellect and beauty. And...the existence you could call a modern Cleopatra would probably be this class’ Nanjou Kisa.”

“.....?!” Mikado doubted his ears.

During class, a student was praised as one of the most beautiful people that ever existed. On top of that, his world history teacher would never say things like that. He was a serious, stern man in the later half of his fifties, and never praised the students on anything besides their knowledge.

One theory was that the world history teacher Yamada would sing Homer’s lullabies<sup>1</sup>, and only converses with his wife using the Code of Hammurabi<sup>2</sup>. That explains why Mikado couldn’t believe that the same person just started praising Kisa’s beauty out of the blue.

“Alright, Kitamikado. Tell me about the similarities that Nanjou Kisa and Cleopatra share.”

“Me?!” Mikado was shocked that his name appeared now.

“Yeah, you. Is there any other Kitamikado in this class?”

Being told that, Mikado had no choice but to stand up.

“U-Um...I don’t quite grasp the intention of that question...”

The teacher raised his eyebrows.

“You should know that very well. Explain it in 200 hundreds words, with [Beauty] as the topic. If you can’t, your points on the school record will go down to 10%.”

“Aren’t they going down a bit too much?!”

Looking over to his side, Mikado spotted Kisa, as she honored him with an expectant gaze. She had both her hands on her smartphone. And Mikado could clearly make out that she was using a recording app.

—She’s securing proof...!

Mikado yet again realized the situation he was in. This situation was definitely weird.

“Sensei...Are you okay? Are you being threatened by Nanjou by chance...?”

As Mikado tested his assumptions with this question, the teacher grew enraged.

“I’m not being threatened! Nanjou-sama is an angel, I say! A goddess! The greatest existence you can find on this earth, and the most fit to be your partner, Kitamikado! If you don’t agree to marry her, I’ll keep taking away points, okay!?”

“Just make it zero then for all I care! Are you really alright, Sensei?!”

Mikado couldn’t help but feel worried for his teacher. Maybe one of his family members was being held hostage...or some debt was pushed onto him...either way, the teacher was like a different person from yesterday. To think that Kisa wouldn’t stop at just her classmates, and even prepared a teacher for her attack.

Mikado looked over at Kisa.

“Nanjou...What is this about...? You can’t just trouble outsiders like this, you know...?”

“D-Don’t make a scary face like that! I didn’t trouble anyone!”

“Then what is this situation?!”

But, Mikado was interrupted by the teacher.

“Kitamikado! No private talk during class! Stand in the hallway, and repent on your actions!”

“This world is unfair!”

There was Mikado, once again realizing that this rotten Japan needed reformation.

Mikado opened his lunch box in the classroom. Inside the black lacquerware was raw fish and vegetables seasoned with vinegar, boiled dark edible seaweed, grilled fish, and much more. It was a traditional Japanese dish often eaten at the Kitamikado household. At first glance, it might seem plain, but it offers a nutritious balance and perfectly filled your stomach so that it was not too bloated. Getting only a sloppy lunch by buying it at the cafeteria or elsewhere, was not something that the Kitamikado Family, reigning over Japan, endorsed.

“...Thanks for the food.”

As Mikado pressed his hands together, a short prayer came flying over from the seat next to him. Looking over, Kisa had just opened her flower-pattern lunch box, and the second after, the girls from the class came rushing over.

“Woow! Kisa-chan’s lunch is amazing!” “So cute!”

“There’s even octopus-shaped weiners in there!” “So cute!”

“So girly!” “So cute!”

“The omelette looks so cute!” “The glacé on the carrots is adorable!”

Mikado worried whether they knew any other words of praise besides cute and adorable.

—Was Nanjou this popular before...?

Being the daughter of a rich family, she always has this hard to approach atmosphere, so the classmates were always kind of passing by her. No mistaking it, she made some moves in the background. That being said, Mikado couldn't deny the fact that Kisa's lunch looked cute, and definitely delicious. Unlike Mikado's, which was only based around nutrition, hers was mouth-watering.

And the girls around her grew noisier.

"Did you make this yourself, Kisa-chan~?"

"Really, Nanjou-san is perfect in every way~"

"I'm really envious of the boy that gets to marry you!"

"He must be the luckiest, and happiest person in the world!"

"He'll get to eat this cute-looking cooking every day after all!"

And so on, as they all gazed over at Mikado. Annoying. Just as annoying as those TV advertisements. Although Mikado truly felt uncomfortable, he couldn't help but be interested about what all this ruckus over her food was about, and he looked over. Kisa didn't miss that, as she giggled.

"Kitamikado-san...If you want a bite that badly, I don't mind giving you a bit."

"No...I feel like there might be poison in there."

Mikado truly had this feeling in his guts. After all that's happened today, I might have to just expect the worst here...Mikado thought to himself, as his wariness was raised.

"How rude. If you were to collapse here, it would be clear as day that I was the culprit. Look, I will take a bite..." Kisa picked up a part of her flashy looking omelette with her chopsticks, and put it into her mouth.

Her facial color didn't worsen, and she didn't seem to have any breathing problems, so it seemed safe.



“No poison in there, huh.”

“That’s what I told you. Here, Kitamikado-san, I will feed you. Open wide~”

Kisa picked up a bite of the omelette from a different part, and pushed it towards Mikado with a smile.

“No, but...”

Being fed by a girl like this would make them look like lovers.

“My, are you embarrassed? How pure you are, Kitamikado-san.”

A clear provocation. If he were to sternly decline now, it would be taken as a sign of him being conscious of her. It might be a bit far as a sign of affection, but it would definitely put him in a disadvantageous situation during the game.

“...Guess I’ll take one bite.”

Mikado rid himself of any hesitation, and took the omelette into his mouth. It was soft and fluffy, a moderate level of heat was gushing out from the inside. And, sweeter than any sweets Mikado had ever eaten. Though it was a mystery as to why that was the case.

“And? Was it edible...?” Kisa asked, slightly worried.

“So there really is something inedible in there?!”

“There isn’t! I’m asking in the sense of the taste!”

“Oh...Yeah, it’s delicious.”

“Thank god...” Kisa put one hand on her chest as she let out a relieved sigh.

—She’s...cute...?

Seeing Kisa like that, Mikado was flustered. She picked up her lunch box, and closed in on Mikado’s desk.

“I-If it’s possible, maybe you could try out the other dishes as well? I

want to hear your impressions.”

“I’m not all too familiar with cooking. All I can say is if something is delicious or not.”

“That’s perfectly fine.”

“You’re not going to put some crazy bill on me later, right...?”

“You’re holding me in too high regard, you know?!”

Yes, Mikado had a high evaluation of her, as the successor of the Nanjou Family that is. That being said, there didn’t seem to be any ulterior motive here, and her cooking was truly delicious, so he gladly accepted Kisa’s offer. And then, he heard a voice.

“If you want impressions, then leave that to me! To the tongue that was raised by McDonalds and Joyfull~ Thanks for the food!”

The girl that came rushing in like a storm looked similar to Kisa. In response to the girl’s try to steal away the lunch box, Kisa frantically separated herself. But, the girl didn’t give up just yet. Now she held it above her head, as she screamed.

“Mizuki?! Why are you here?! How did you know?!”

“Ehhh? That’s pretty easy though? Everyone was making a ruckus after all. And why did you hide something interesting like this from me~?”

The girl jumped up and up again to grab the lunch box from Kisa, but she protected it at all costs. Even after pulling an iron claw on her forehead, the girl didn’t give up.

“Nanjou...? Who is that...?” Mikado was perplexed at the sudden arrival of the assailant.

“Ah, Kitamikado-san, she is...” Kisa tried to explain, but was interrupted by the girl flashing a cheerful pose with a peace sign.

“Cheese! I’m Onee-chan’s little sister, Nanjou Mizuki! I’m a second year in middle school that wants to do lewd stuff with Mikado-

kun~!”

“Excuse me...?”



This must be the 100th time that Mikado doubted his ears today. The girl that called herself Mizuki had a beautiful figure, not losing at all to her older sister Kisa. She had innocent facial features and eyes that were filled with the desire to tease people. But, in the depths of those eyes was not ill will, just a healthy cheekiness. Her thin lips were crooked with glamour, and her eyelashes were as long as a Westerners. Her two-side up hairstyle made her look even cuter, yet not too childish. Her middle school uniform was slightly loose and not as proper as it could be, but that didn't seem to be because of flirtatious intentions, rather it was just sloppily put on because she couldn't be bothered.

"Maybe it's my ears playing tricks on me, but I feel like I just heard some weird vocabulary in there...like lewd or something...?"

"You heard that right! It seems like Onee-chan doesn't want to do it with Mikado-kun, so I will take her place, and do lots of lewd stuff with you!"

"W-W-W-W-What are you saying?!"

Kisa jumped at Mizuki to shut her up, but the girl dodged without much effort.

"Hey hey, did you know? Onee-chan, see, she has hundreds of pictures of—"

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Yet again, Kisa panicked and jumped at Mizuki, succeeding in closing off her mouth.

"Mgh! Mgh mghhh mghhh!!!"

Inaudible groans were leaking out of her sealed-off mouth.

"I-I'm sorry, Kitamikado-san. I'll make sure she repents on this during a one-way diving trip to the Arctic Ocean..."

"No, no need for that...And maybe stop it right there, she seems to be gasping for air."

Mizuki's face was starting to grow pale, as she was trying to resist.

"But, I cannot allow her to talk any more than this, so I will just have to deal with her gently like this..."

"The moment you deal with her it's not gentle any more! Just hurry up and let her go already!"

Unable to watch a Kouhai he had just met get killed off right in front of him, Mikado rescued Mizuki from Kisa. After being saved, Mizuki dashed over to hide behind Mikado.

"Onee-chan, you're way too serious! I was just joking!"

"There are things that aren't fit to be joked about...!"

With a flustered expression, Kisa's breathing was rough. Even more than Mizuki, who was almost choked to death. But, Mizuki quickly recovered and grabbed Mikado's arm in a merry manner.

"Woah! Mikado-kun in real life is even cooler than in all the pictures! How nice, how nice! I also want him!"

"Want? I'm not some object, you know..." Mikado gave a bitter smile, but it wasn't awkward for him in any way.

After all, Mizuki's looks were younger than Kisa's, giving off less intellect than Kisa's. And, the Nanjou Family's classic suspiciousness was rather weak and drifting in her. Seeing a miniature Kisa like this and receiving honest feelings of affection from her wasn't a bad feeling at all. It was almost like it was practice for him to receive true affection from Kisa.

"Aha, Mikado-kun is blushing. Cute!"

"I'm not cute."

"Yes you are! Cute like a french fry!"

"French fries are cute?"

"Of course they are~ Especially with french vinegar, they're even

cuter!”

“So the taste decides if something is cute...?”

It was a domain that Mikado couldn't not follow along with.

“Ahh, this is bad! I can totally understand Onee-chan's feelings now!”

“Mizuki! Hurry and go back to your middle school division! Don't bother me!” Kisa pulled Mizuki away from Mikado.

“Ehhh? But that's so faaar! Since I came here all the way, let me join in the fun!”

“There's no fun here! This is a serious competition!”

“Then, let me watch over the competition instead!”

“You're not just going to watch, are you?!”

“Yeah, pretty much.”

“That was easy!”

The Nanjou sisters had a verbal war in front of Mikado. Although Mikado enjoyed the beauties' quarrel quite a bit, an ominous thought entered his mind.

—The middle school division is far...? Isn't it right next to us...?

But, before he could find out the reason for this feeling of discomfort, lunch break came to an end.

As the footsteps of the walking teacher sounded, Mikado focussed on the English grammar questions in front of him. His eyes were fixated on the workbook on his desk, and while splitting the sentence, he broke the components into small factions, solving one problem after the other. Since he had reviewed the topic of last class, it wasn't that big of a deal, but it was the way of the Kitamikado Family to always take everything with the utmost seriousness. However, today, there was a noise, an unwanted sound.

“Mikado-kun. Mikado-kun. Hey. Play along with me~”

Sitting right next to him on an extra chair was Mizuki, rubbing her shoulders against him. Past her was Kisa, who sent death glares towards them. Feeling gravely endangered, Mikado called out to Mizuki in a quiet voice.

“What do you mean play along...? I’m in class right now. Go back to your middle school division if you’re that bored.”

“It’s fine~ I’m an idiot after all. Nobody expects anything from me, not even Obaa-chan.” Mizuki laughed rather carefreely, not bothered by that fact.

—With Obaa-chan she means...the current head of the Nanjou Family, huh?

Mikado remembered back to when he first saw that old lady with a stern expression decorating her face. His parents told him ‘This is your enemy’, and he felt like he was looking at something akin to the demon lord in the fantasies he had read.

“Hey, rather than that...” Mizuki whispered in Mikado’s ear.  
“Mikado-kun, you like Onee-chan, right?”

“Huh?!”

Mikado’s heart came to a crashing stop for a second. Although it reengaged activities shortly after, he checked in on Kisa’s reaction. She still glared at them like a demon, with bloodshot eyes, but seemingly unable to pick up anything they were saying. And, Mizuki continued.

“Ahaha, it’s totally obvious. I don’t know how Onee-chan doesn’t realize after all that, but I guess that ‘Love makes one blind’, huh?”

“I-I don’t like her...” Mikado’s voice grew raspy out of nervousness. All he could think about was trying to get away from this deadlock that he was in.

“I know that you can’t tell her face to face. Both Obaa-chan and Onee-chan spoke about this game or whatever...But.” Mizuki giggled.

“Mikado-kun, you like me as well, right?”

“What are you...?”

“I know it! I felt a connection between us. At the very least, I know that I’m second to Onee-chan. I mean, I look like her after all~”

Bulls-eye. Although it wasn’t about to change into a feeling of love, Mikado’s body reacted greatly towards Mizuki, Kisa’s little sister.

“Tomato soup and ketchup are also the same, but still different...”

“It’s basically the same! It’s fine if we look like each other! Once you put the tomato sauce on pizza, it all amounts to the same!”

“That would make it really soggy.”

Mizuki came closer to Mikado’s ear, her lips were about to touch it.

“Hey... there won’t be much to bother about if it was me, you know?”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Since I’m not the successor of the family, I can just leave the family if I feel like it. Unlike Onee-chan, I’m honest too. I’ll let you do everything you want to do, Mikado-kun.”

Mizuki’s body temperature came falling upon him. Her gesture of putting her hand between her legs was oddly charming. Out from between her white thighs, a sweet aroma escaped.

“What do you want to do, Mikado-kun? If you ask for it, I would become your girlfriend right here, and I don’t mind marrying you.”

Those words were like an invitation to take the easy route. Being invited like this by a girl that resembled Kisa this much almost made Mikado glad to be born a man. However, he just shrugged at Mizuki’s words, as he let out a sigh.

“...I’m currently in a game with Nanjou Kisa. I will not back out in the middle of it.”



No matter the circumstances, a man from the Kitamikado Family will not step down from anything. He was not allowed to.

Mizuki's eyes opened wide.

"Hmmm...Straightforward, I see. Seems like Onee-chan's got good taste." Her voice sounded weirdly cheerful.

"Anyway, I want to ask you something."

"What is it~?"

"Why can you just stay in this classroom...while the teacher doesn't get mad at you...?" Mikado gave Mizuki a dubious gaze.

Normally, a student from the middle school division would not be allowed to just sit in the classrooms of the high school division, at least not during class. Even if she used the influence of the Nanjou Family, it's weird that none of the classmates are complaining.

Mizuki laughed, clearly thinking of this as fun.

"Fufu~ I guess I can't say that. I feel like Onee-chan might actually kill me."

"So there really is a special reason...? Explains why I had that feeling of discomfort the whole time..."

"Umm, I guess I can give you a hint~"

"Please do."

Mikado took the bait. In this situation where he's walking around in a maze, he would gladly take any hint.

"Then, I have a condition! I want your phone number, as well as your line ID!"

"I don't mind..."

"Yay!" Mizuki struck a winning pose, as Mikado fiddled with his phone.

They didn't just exchange contact information, but following that was also the profile and an icon for when she would call him.

"The hint, you see, is that, in this classroom, there is one person that doesn't praise Onee-chan. Find that person, and talk to them in a place with nobody around. That should do it, you know?"

It was more than simple to find the person that wasn't praising Kisa. Kawaraya Kokage, the paparazzi always following Mikado around while being a member of the newspaper club. And Today, she showed no signs of wanting to approach Kisa. Not to mention that, while all the other students were gleefully enjoying their student life, her expression was pale as she staggered around. Naturally, that made her more than suspicious.

Well, to be fair, the other students were ten times more suspicious than her, but she stood out amongst them in her own way. Normally, she was an entity that Mikado would rather not involve himself with, but just this once, it was unavoidable. Planning to gain a trustworthy contact at least for this situation, he made his way towards Kokage's seat. To not raise any suspicion from his surroundings, he spoke in a quiet voice.

"Kawaraya, I have something to talk about, can you come with me for a second?"

"Eh...? Y-Yeah, but why?"

For some reason, Kokage looked terrified.

"It's not that big of a deal. You know, about that."

—Go and read the mood already, Mikado put a bit more force into it as he spoke. But, Kokage didn't move, and just tilted her head in confusion.

"That...? You mean the native people in the Amazon forest, who live acting like animals?"

*What are you talking about?!* Mikado screamed out inside his heart. That being said, he couldn't just waste time here. He only had the later half of lunch break. He decided to make something up, and get

Kokage to come with him.

“Yeah yeah, about that.”

“I don’t really want to talk about that...So I’m sorry.”

“I don’t want to either, you know!”

“Eh, but wasn’t it you who brought that up in the first place, Mikado-kun?”

“I didn’t!”

“Yeah, I’d rather talk about French vinegar...”

“Again, what are we talking about here!?”

No matter what he tried, he couldn’t get her to move an inch. It felt like she didn’t want to come with him no matter what.

“Anyway, come with me. There’s something I need to check with you.”

“O-Okay...”

Mikado started walking as he pulled on Kokage’s camera. The belt of said camera was around her neck, and since it was something precious to her, Kokage could only come along with him. Since there was a high chance that the room, and the entire building was wiretapped, he took her out to the courtyard. After they moved to the relatively safe sports ground, Mikado picked up one of the metallic tools to even the ground, and gave Kokage another one.

“Here, Kwaraya, you do it as well.”

“W-What are we doing? I’m not really that good at making crop circles...”

“Neither am I!”

Kokage shook her head in a saddened manner.

“I tell you, it’s impossible to do that just during break, with two amateurs like us... A circle with a 5 meter radius takes five people one evening...”

“I don’t need that sort of information! It would be suspicious if it was only the two of us here, right? That’s why we’re doing this while we talk.”

“Wouldn’t it be even more suspicious if someone not from the baseball club suddenly started doing that...?”

She was right.

“That is true, but...Can’t help it. Doing anything else here would be even more unnatural.”

“What about sprinting?”

“You up for that? It’s going to be tough.”

“Maybe a tug of war? That way, we won’t be too far away.”

“That probably looks too surreal.”

“Umm.. throwing balls at each other?”

“What are we, father and son?”

In the end, they decided to pull circles as they had their secret conversation. In the event that something came up, they could just make up the excuse that they were asked to do this by a classmate that is part of the baseball club. It seemed to be quite the heavy load on Kokage, because she let out groans as she walked. Although Mikado felt the same, there was something more important right now.

“Kawaraya...don’t you think that something is weird today at school?”

“.....!”

Thus, Kokage’s feet came to a sudden halt.

“I thought so. The thing is, I also—”

“No, nothing!”

“Eh?”

“It feels normal like always! I don’t get any weird vibes or anything! It’s a peaceful day in Japan, and I am but a humble normal resident of this country! I don’t know, nor realize anything!”

No matter how you looked at it, she was clearly acting weird. Sweat was running down her head like a waterfall and her eyes were rolling inside her sockets. Seeing that there was someone else who felt the same way, Mikado was relieved.

“No, you must have, right? After all, everyone is just flocking over to praise Kisa left right and center.”

“That’s because Kisa-chan is a wonderful person! An existence deserving all the praise! Yes, I praise her as well, I really do! I’m just a normal person so don’t abduct me! Don’t turn me into cattle! I want to stay on earth no matter what, so please...!”

Kokage fell to the ground in a 大 pose, as she started crying.

“I don’t think that crying right here will help you resisting in any way.”

“So it’s already too late?!”

“Too late or not, I feel like what you think is happening might not actually be the case...Probably.”

“I’m wrong, you say?! About the fact that everyone around me has been exchanged for an alien?!”

“Why would they praise Nanjou after turning into aliens?”

“Why would any normal earthling praise Nanjou-san!?”

“You sure got a rude side to you, huh.”

But, just as what she was pointing out, normally, their classmates would never show this much affection to Kisa. Basically, the one acting suspicious is clearly Kisa. No doubt that she was secretly planning something, but just bluntly asking her to speak won't work. Rather, she would grow wary, and raise her guard even further.

"For now, I want any information that you have, Kawaraya. Is there nothing else that grabbed your attention?"

Kokage got up from the ground, and brushed off the dirt on her uniform.

"Something else...That reminds me, today when you got dropped off, I snuck into your car, and hid in the trunk..."

"In the trunk?!"

"Ah, don't pay too much attention to that. It's what I always do."

"Of course I'd pay attention to that! What are you doing behind my back?! Trunk?! Eh?!" Mikado felt a chill as questionable information, not even related to the main topic, appeared.

"It's just one way of gathering information. But, today, things were a bit different...The trunk was a bit narrow, and it felt like someone else was in there..."

"A dead body?!"

"Ah, don't pay any mind to that. There was no problem at all."

"Well thank you!"

"Rather than that, the problem today was the driving. It was rougher than usual, and my body banged against the interior of the trunk countless times. Really, you have to think about the people hiding in your trunk as well, I say!" Kokage snorted with arms crossed.

"I don't think you normally do that..."

Mikado was fed-up, and felt like the current conversation wasn't worth his time in the slightest.

“What else...? Something different from normal...?”

“Hmmm...Oh right. You know, I’m always spying on Mikado-kun as I’m hiding on the other side of the roof of the classroom.”

“A ninja?!”

“And today for some reason, I couldn’t use the hole in the wall I would always use to sneak inside the ceiling, because it was blocked. No, rather, it was almost like that hole never existed in the first place...”

“Oho...”

Mikado gazed at the school building. It was a prestigious school, Sousei Academy. With many talented and gifted children of noble and prestigious backgrounds passing through it’s hallways, it had lived through several eras. But, it was the same scenery he was used to, with nothing unusual to be found. Nonetheless, with Kokage’s information, he had the feeling that something big was going on in the background.

“Ah, also...although this might be something minor...” Kokage said, seemingly hesitant.

“What’s wrong?”

“The thing is...there is another me going around school right now... Ah, but, it’s not that big of a deal! Don’t mind it!”

“It is a big deal! What’s up with that?! Where is the other Kawaraya at?!” Mikado pushed his body forward.

“U-Um...When I met her on the stairs, she abruptly came at me to grab me, then she suddenly face-planted into the ground, and lost consciousness...Since she’d probably rot there, I put her in the refrigerator in the cooking classroom.”

“Is that really going to be okay...?”

Mikado really wanted to avoid his classmate getting taken away by the police. As always, you couldn’t let your guard down her, the one

who leaves chaos wherever she goes. Well, it must have been quite a shock for her to see someone with the same face.

“What about you, Mikado-kun? Did you find something weird besides Kisa-chan today?”

“Yeah.”

“What is it?”

“The smell of the classroom. Today, it was filled with the smell of tonic.”

“Tonic...That make-up like thing your father puts in his hair?”

Mikado nodded.

“Exactly. A normal high school boy wouldn’t use that. At the very least, there was no smell like that until yesterday. Something is weird...”

Kokage went pale.

“Maybe a boy’s hair loss suddenly sped up...”

“I don’t think that’s the case.”

“It’s not, huh...”

Mikado nodded.

“For now, let’s gather some more information. Kawaraya, can you use your phone?”

“I can, but I can’t get a good signal...Even though I had three bars yesterday...” Kokage gazed at her phone in confusion.

“Same here. Neither does GPS work. Let’s step outside the school for a second.”

“Y-You’ll get scolded by the teachers!”

“Probably. But, it’s worth trying.”



“Eh...Ehhhh...”

Mikado took the hesitant Kokage with him, and left the sports ground. They found the back gate, which connected to the roadway outside, but they were held back by the fence. Although Mikado tried to open the door, it was properly locked. When he wanted to climb over it...

“Kitamikado! What are you doing! You can’t leave without permission!” His homeroom teacher screamed at him.

Hence, Mikado climbed back down.

“I’m sorry, some printouts flew outside. It’s right there, so could I quickly get it?”

In response, the teacher got angry.

“No! You know very well that we have rules here! Class is about to begin, so go back to your classroom!”

“...I understand.”

Mikado returned to the school building, with Kokage, who shrunk together, tightly gripping her camera.

—Seems like they desperately don’t want me to get outside, huh...

And, he couldn’t use his smartphone. It was almost like he was stranded on a deserted island. Feeling the sharp gaze of the homeroom teacher on his back, Mikado thought about how to get out of this situation.

As Mikado returned to the classroom, Mizuki whispered at him.

“And? Did you understand anything, Mikado-kun?”

“I feel like I got some valuable hints, but nothing major that could solve this situation.”

“I’m sure that you’ll definitely find out. It’d be troublesome if you lost against Onee-chan because of something like this~”

“Troublesome if I lost? What do you mean?”

“I mean, if you become Onee-chan’s thing, you probably won’t be able to go on a date with me, you know?”

“Do what you want, I don’t care about a date...” Mikado gave a bitter smile.

“Oh I will~ I’ve taken a liking to Mikado-kun after all. And I’ve always wanted to see what this ‘date’ thing is about!” Mizuki gave an innocent laugh.

She might actually turn into a normal girl, unlike Kisa, who was already afflicted with poison. Then again, a Kisa without poison wasn’t Kisa.

“H-Hey...Why are you clinging to each other like that? Can you not seduce my little sister like that?” Kisa approached them in a fretting manner.

“Kyaaa, I’ll be killed by Onee-chan~” Mizuki gave a cute wink as she separated from Mikado.

“I’m not seducing her or anything.”

“You sure are! At this point, you’re just looking for the next best girl. Even during lunch break, you were secretly talking with Kawaraya-san, right?”

“Eeeek...?!”

A bit further away, Kokage’s shoulders twitched at the sudden arrival of her name.

“W-W-W-We weren’t doing anything of that sort! We were just tending the sports field outside, Kitamikado-san and I! It just bothers me if there’re any footprints!”

“Were you always that fussy about cleanliness?” Kisa raised her eyebrows.

“Y-Yes! I hate when there’s fingerprints sticking to the door knob,

and I'm the type that cleans away her own fingerprints when going to someone else's house!"

"Are you a thief?!"

If he could, Mikado would have wished for Kokage to keep quiet now. The more you talk, the more suspicious you sound. Quickly keeping quiet was the best idea here, he was sure. After all, knowing that she belonged to the Kawaraya Family, known to spread unnecessary information and chaos, he grew more worried.

"But, was there really a need to tend to the ground with two people?" Kisa wondered with a suspicious expression.

Mikado quickly followed up.

"You see, I would have felt bad having a girl do it alone, so I helped. Kawaraya is the only person I do talk to from time to time after all. Right, Kawaraya?"

"Ah, yes! It's fun talking with Mikado-kun! About NASA and so on!" Kokage panicked as she played along.

"Hmpf...first my little sister, and then Kawaraya-san, approaching them in infidelity..."

"I don't think this is about infidelity..."

"Kitamikado-san is currently in a game with me after all...Forget about other girls. Only...be on the attack with me..." Kisa's expression turned sad.

Although he knew that it wasn't out of jealousy, he could still feel his head become hot.

"Don't worry. I am only looking at you after all."

"I-Is that so..." Kisa's voice slowly faded towards the end.

Returning to her seat, she once again put the book in her hand, and continued reading. Although she didn't honor him with any gaze anymore, Kisa's ears were visibly red.

Sixth period ended after the math teacher kept praising Kisa's beauty mathematically. Mikado knew the most about her appealing features, but using an entire class for that was more scary than admirable. And also, he found it scary that he happened to agree with the teacher. It was a strange feeling, as if he was being influenced by his surroundings, swept along by their praising of Kisa.

Having finished his goodbyes for the day, he did not make his way to the Kitamikado chauffeur waiting at the front gate. Neither did he enjoy some idle talk with his classmates. Rather, he secretly snuck out of the classroom together with Kokage.

"...Mikado-kun? Why aren't you going home?" Kokage whispered as she walked besides Mikado.

While being aware of the student's gazes around them, he returned a quiet reply.

"Nothing will change if I just go home here. I have to clear up Nanjou's conspiracy, or the same thing will happen tomorrow."

"Conspiracy?! NASA again...!"

"No relation whatsoever to outer space. And I said Nanjou's conspiracy, right?"

"But, aliens really exist! NASA and the CIA are only hiding that! Actually, in Area 51, there's lots of—"

"Let's have this conversation another time."

"Uuuu..."

Since Mikado felt this would turn into a longer conversation, he quickly cut Kokage off, who gave a saddened grumble. Although she might be the successor of the number one information gathering family, she was still naive enough to just leak crucial information out of the blue.

"...That's a promise then. I'll have you listen to me talk about NASA's conspiracy all day long." Kokage pouted.

“Y-Yeah...”

“I’ll be expecting a written description of your thoughts.”

“If it’s within 400 characters...”

Mikado pondered if he had actually just made things worse. But for now, he wanted to focus on Kisa’s conspiracy.

“Is there no other way to get inside the roof where you’re always watching me? If possible, I want to watch over our classroom.”

“Watch over? Why?”

“I want to see what everyone else does while we’re not there. Like Kisa giving out orders or them being bribed, that sort of proof would be great.”

With that, he should be able to fight on equal ground with Kisa.

“I see...Since the hole is gone, we can’t get inside that easily, but we can make our own hole.”

“Alright, then guide me there.”

“Yes!” Kokage nodded.

The place that Kokage took Mikado to was an empty classroom right on top of their own. Stored in there were dug out minerals and fossils from the region, and boxes that were used by the farmers to carry their props, piled everywhere.

—I thought so. The smell is different here.

Normally, it always smelled old and muddy, but today, the scent was fresh, and pure. Slowly but steadily, Mikado started to get a grasp on Kisa’s conspiracy. But, it wasn’t completely clear yet. He had to attain the final piece.

“Normally, this wall here was a bit unstable, so I could push it off and get inside, but...”

At the wall Kokage pointed at, there were no cracks or openings.

“Hmmm, with something like this, we might be able to break through.”

Using the hammer and saw that Mikado gathered, they could probably break through, so Mikado worked on it, while trying to keep the resulting sound to a minimum.

“Thank you very much! With this, I’ll be able to stealthily observe Mikado-kun like always!”

“There’s nothing stealthy about it now that I’m aware of it!”

“...Ah, forget about today please!”

“As if I would!”

The impact of all that happened today would make it impossible to suffer from memory loss.

“It can be a bit complicated to not lose yourself in there, so let me guide you!”

With those words, Kokage slipped past Mikado, entered the hole and Mikado followed. The insides were really thin and narrow and with the sparse light entering through the cracks, he could barely make out the surroundings. Following Kokage, he lowered his body, and moved forward.

Naturally, all that filled his vision was Kokage’s small butt. Unable to take his sight away from that, he could only gaze at the slightly shaking, plump behind of his classmate. Kokage didn’t think about this being a possibility, as her skirt was crumpled up even further. The raw skin of her thighs, as well as the final cloth to protect a girl’s most important place, were both perfectly visible.



Even if he was raised under the strict code of the Kitamikado Family, it wouldn't stop the chaos that this proximity brought to his consciousness .

“Ah, I took the wrong way!”

“??!”

Kokage suddenly stopped, and Mikado’s face bumped into her butt. His nose touched the white fabric, and a nice smell ran down his nose.

“Hya?! M-Mikado-kun?! What are you doing...Touching me there counts as molestation, you know!”

“It’s because you suddenly stopped!”

“Just get away from me...it tickles...No...!”

“Then stop going backwards like that!”

“This here is a dead end...!”

It took them quite a bit of time until they got into the right position. Once Mikado made it to a more open space, he let out a sigh.

“Ugh...What a scandal...” He made a fist with his hand as he reflected on just happened.

Colliding with the lower half of a female classmate, not to mention directly with her panties was nothing more than sexual harassment. If that was leaked to the public, the Kitamikado Family would be branded with a dirty reputation.

“Alright then, let’s go. It’s over here!” Kokage moved again.

“Ah, umm, Kawaraya. That right now was just an accident...I couldn’t help it...”

“Huh? What are you talking about?” Kokage’s eyes opened wide.

So that he didn’t directly admit his crime, Mikado chose his words carefully.

“I mean, you know...when we bumped into each other just now...”

Kokage couldn’t hold back her laughter.



“Ahaha, don’t sweat it. With it being this narrow, you couldn’t help it!”

“...Are you a goddess?!”

“Rather, I should apologize for pushing my butt into your face like that. It must have been tough.”

“Well...it’s fine...”

Rather, Mikado found himself thinking that it was pretty enjoyable. But, Mikado felt like if he said that, she would definitely get angry at him this time around, so he just swallowed that thought. Yet again, Mikado and Kokage moved again.

“If it’s not the fault of aliens, then what is happening with this school right now...? Maybe Nanjou-san really did something...”

“She’s presumably aiming for the bandwagon effect.”

“Bandwagon effect...? What’s that?” Kokage slightly turned her head over to look at Mikado and hit her head on the wall.

“Humans easily get swept along by the evaluations of things from the people around them, right? It might not be something delicious, but if everyone keeps saying that it is, it might as well taste that way now.”

“Oh right, that happens.”

“That’s the bandwagon effect. Japanese people especially fall victim to that very easily.”

A food product that is advertised as healthy in TV shows and advertisements immediately vanishes from any stores. Because it’s being stormed by housewives.

“Using that, she is having everyone in this school praise her, to make me think what an amazing person she is. While at it, the best possible outcome would be that I fall for her at the same time.”

“Why would she do something like that...?”

“Well...A lot happened, let's leave it at that.”

Since he couldn't tell Kokage about the love game, he kept quiet then and there.

“The problem is how she manages to make everyone act like that.”

“Maybe she's bribing them after all?”

“It would be great if it was something simple like that...But the enemy is Nanjou.”

Eventually, the two of them arrived right on top of their classroom. Paying attention that not the smallest sound would leak, he carefully worked on a small hole in the roof. Cutting a long and narrow rectangular area free, he quickly grabbed it so it wouldn't fall. Crouching down as best as they could, they glanced down into their classroom. And what they saw was...Weirdly listless classmates.

“Haaa, finally done...”

“Chief, how about we go drink something on the way home. I found a nice store.”

“It's still too early to let your guard down. Until we have received a report that the target has stepped into the car, we can't relax.”

“For those who's makeup is crumbling, make sure to refresh it now while you can!”

“My child has caught a cold, so would it be fine if I left earlier...?”

“Yeah, one classmate missing isn't that dramatic, especially now that classes have ended.”

“I still need to work some more overtime, so count me in if you need someone.”

“I'll keep you in mind if we need someone for club activities after school.”

This certainly didn't sound like a conversation between high school

students whose day just ended.

Kokage was shaking.

“W-W-W-What is going on down there...? Is this some drama recording...? Are we inside some TV drama...?”

“No...that’s not it.” Mikado shook his head.

“Then, what in the world...? What is happening with our school...?”

“This isn’t our school.”

“Eh...?” Kokage’s eyes opened wide.

With all the information that Mikado gathered, he constructed the conclusion.

“Kawaraya...Do you know the word ‘Big Con’?”

“Doesn’t con mean something like fraud or swindle in English? Some big swindle then?”

“Yeah. It’s a trick that a great swindler pulled before. To deceive the target, an entire shop is booked, the staff and guests are exchanged for actors and they act along to deceive the target”

“And what does that have to do with our school...?” Kokage tilted her head in confusion.

Under their eyes, their classmates were taking a ‘break’ right now. This wasn’t a normal sight you would see after class in a normal classroom.

“...I’m thinking that this whole school is a set. Every single person here, the teachers, students, and even your own double, is a cast member that Kisa prepared. It’s all to make me get swept along by the atmosphere.”

“The whole school is a set?! That can’t be!”

“No, the Nanjou Family has both the assets and connections to make

that possible. Even this morning, I fell asleep on my ride to the school. She probably used some sleeping gas, and during that time the car probably drove a different way to a different school.”

Just today, Mikado couldn't get reception for his smartphone. And a homeroom teacher that would pay attention so that he doesn't leave the school appeared. Finally, the staged students Kisa organized. All of that to lure Mikado into the corner.

“B-But, preparing people that look exactly like our staff is impossible...”

“They don't need a doppelgänger. Today's makeup techniques allow for a lot, you know. You also thought that the driver this morning was a bit rougher, right? They probably got some different one just for this.”

Kokage put one hand on her mouth as she gasped. She was clearly shocked.

“We have to escape quickly...But, I wonder if we're even allowed to leave...”

“I'm sure we can. And then, we'll be brought here tomorrow yet again.”

If you continued the bandwagon effect for days, weeks, and months if necessary, even Mikado would surely give in at some point. That is Kisa's speculation. No mistaking it, that she's using every method at her disposal to make Mikado fall for her.

“T-The police! We can get the police active here!” Kokage started to panic.

“Hold your horses there. No need to rush. There's a more interesting way to deal with this.”

“What is it...?”

“Right now, Nanjou thinks that she's holding the advantage, that we're dancing in the palm of her hand. Basically, her defensiveness is at zero!

”

“De...fense...?”

“Yeah. I cannot let this chance slip, where she’s letting her guard down.”

As Kokage was lost, Mikado gave a confident smile.

He spotted Kisa in the hallway in front of the student entrance. Although she was probably waiting for Mikado to arrive, she was looking at the blackboard gazing at the displayed grades, which was very likely just an act. She must want to see Mikado off, stepping into the prepared car. Next to her was Mizuki, operating her smartphone.

“My, Kitamikado-san, you’re still at school.” Kisa gave a slight bow as she spotted him.

However, she must have been clearly aware that he hadn’t left yet. Before he arrived at the entrance, he spotted several surveillance cameras, following his steps.

“Perfect timing. I was searching for you, Nanjou.”

“What what? We’re going on a date?!” Mizuki jumped towards Mikado.

“No, not the little sister, but the older one.”

“Ehhh? But I’m a Nanjou as well! Take responsibility for getting my hopes up and treat me to some parfait!”

“Another time. I’m a bit busy right now.”

Mikado’s gaze was asking Mizuki to stay out of the game for now.

“...Hmmm, I see. That’s a promise then!”

Maybe she realized his intentions, as she honestly stepped down. Mikado once again turned towards Kisa, and announced.

“And...Nanjou.”

“Y-Yes.” Maybe because of Mikado’s serious mood, Kisa was a bit flustered.

“I’m sorry about this, but...could you spare me some time.”

“U-Ummm...what for, if I may ask?”

“There’s something I desperately need to tell you. With just the two of us, if possible.”

“I see...Let’s go to the western building and use an empty classroom...” With a shaky voice, Kisa responded as she turned her back to Mikado and started walking.

However, Mikado didn’t miss the second where her eyes reflected the joy of victory. She must think that Mikado was going to confess to her after this. She was sure that her plan to influence Mikado worked. Even while walking down the hallway, you could see the happiness in her gesturing and movements.

—You’re way too happy, Nanjou! Your back is wide open!

And yet, Mikado couldn’t help but think that this side of her was extremely cute. If she was nothing but a normal classmate and it was just a normal confession, there probably wouldn’t be anything more blissful than the simple life that awaited ahead.” there probably wouldn’t be any more bliss, a simple life waiting ahead.

However, the Nanjou and Kitamikado Family were enemies, with Kisa and Mikado standing opposite sides. Mikado didn’t know what else to do, so all he could do was win Kisa for himself. With his determination reaching higher levels, Mikado stepped into the empty room.

“Is this...fine?”

“Yeah, this is perfect.”

“Should I lock the door? It would be better if nobody bothered us...”

With all the teachers and students being casted, they surely wouldn’t dare to bother them, but naturally Mikado couldn’t say that. Hence,

he feigned ignorance.

“Yeah, sounds good.”

“I’ll also close the keyhole with some glue, okay?”

“No, no need to go that far.”

Pretty crazy for Kisa to say it like it was nothing out of the ordinary. The floor beneath them was apparently relatively new, as the varnish was still glossy. Chairs and desks were pushed into the corners of the room, and a big space was opened in the middle.

Outside the room, Kokage was peeking inside, as she stood in the hallway. Mikado told her that he would make her come clean and to grab proof for that, he asked her to record it and take pictures. It was all to take a picture of the moment where he would win the love game. However, her way of hiding was too lax. Like this, Kisa might be able to spot her. Hence, Mikado moved in front of the courtyard window-side, so that Kisa had the hallway to her back.

“And...What did you want to talk about, Kitamikado-san?” Kisa asked as she nervously fidgeted.

Her gaze was wavering, and she played with the hem of her skirt.

—Damn it...even like this, I can’t help but think of her as cute...

Mikado desperately sealed off his desire to earnestly confess to her. If he were to lose himself here, he wouldn’t just fall into her hands, but also in the depths of the abyss.

“The thing is...Today, something weird is bothering me...” Mikado announced, as he forcefully mixed a bit of shock into his voice.

“Weird...? Like someone is talking to you inside your head?”

“Not in that way.”

“Don’t tell me...mushrooms growing out of your arms?”

“Not in that way either.”

As Mikado gazed towards the hallway, he saw Kokage walk away.

—Hey, where are you going...?

Though Mikado got a bad feeling from this, he didn't have the time to pay much attention to it. From here on out, he had to carefully pick his words. Without showing words of affection, he had to make Kisa believe in her victory and guide her to show words of affection for Mikado instead. It certainly was a dangerous battle, but if he succeeded, the return from it was immense. Letting all his brain cells work to their fullest, he continued.

“Um...I just realized that Nanjou is really popular with everyone...”

“T-That's right! I am very popular! I have the looks and the brains, a superhuman so to speak!”

It was plain as day that she was forcing those words out of her mouth. After all, she wasn't popular. On the contrary, she didn't even have any normal friends. Although it is for the sake of victory, it must have hurt her pride quite a lot that she had to get casted people to praise her. But even so, Mikado wouldn't stop there.

“I realized. That you really are an amazing person. But, at the same time, I'm a bit frustrated. Because I was actually the first one to realize Nanjou's good points.”

“M-My good points...?” Kisa's body visibly twitched at that keyword.

She pushed her body forward ever so slightly and her eyes opened wide. She was certainly waiting for Mikado to explain what those points were.

“Yeah, you might look perfect and tough on the outside, but you have that clumsy, sweet side of yourself which is very cute.”

Suddenly, Kisa's face started to burn up.

“I-I don't have a clumsy side or anything! I am always perfect! Don't underestimate the successor of the Nanjou Family! I-I'm not cute either!”



“No, you definitely are. You might look calm, but you’re flustered right now.”

“I’m not flustered!”

“You are. Your face is bright red.”

“I’m not red! I’m just bleeding! Bleeding from the face!” Kisa hid her face with her hands.

Through the gaps of her fingers, he could see her teary eyes and even her ears were colored a deep red. While gazing at this unbelievably cute reaction of hers, Mikado felt his own heartbeat accelerate. He was calling the girl he had fallen for cute, so naturally he wouldn’t be able to keep calm.

Mikado desperately tried to control his shaky voice, grabbed Kisa by the wrists and carefully pulled her hands away.

“See, you really are red. What a waste to hide such a beautiful face.”

“Ah...Uuu...”

Kisa couldn’t maintain her balance and leaned against the window. She grit her teeth out of embarrassment and averted her gaze outside the window.

“Kitamikado-san is really acting weird today...Maybe the effect was too strong...”

“Effect?”

“N-Nothing at all.” Kisa quickly shook her head.

Mikado lowered his voice.

“But, because Nanjou is so cute, almost too cute, I keep thinking that I’m not good enough for you and that really puts me down.”

“Eh...”

“I mean, you understand, right? You’re so popular with everyone in

class, you're an untouchable beauty and you're clever like that...Even if I were to confess, you probably wouldn't take me seriously."

"That's not the case!" Kisa responded at the exact same time.

"Of course you do. I'm sure that you don't think of me as special at all."

"T-That's...Um...Yes, you're not special to me at all..."

"See, that's what I thought."

"But but...you're more grown-up than most adults I know and you're very attractive and cool..."

"Attractive...and cool...?"

Hearing such words for the first time from her mouth, Mikado's thoughts got disrupted.

—Calm down, me...You lose if you take her word for gold...

Mikado told himself, when Kisa stood up straight again.

"But...I don't think of you as cool or anything, it's just common knowledge. A girl told me about it! But, what I'm trying to say...is that you are worthy enough for me! And since it's in the rules, I have to respond here!"

"I don't want to force you to respond. I want Nanjou to be happy, so I can only pull back here..." Mikado muttered with a painful voice and was about to walk away.

As he did, Kisa panicked and grabbed his arm.

"W-Wait! It's not impossible! I would be more than happy—"

She bit on. Being this close to victory, Kisa must have panicked to not let it escape. Once your heart and mind falls victim to panic, you become careless with your words. Coming this far, Mikado judged this a cleared game on his end. However, right above him, he heard a crushing sound. A shriek resounded and the person crashed right

through the ground. It was Kokage. Being stuck up to her waist in the floor, she was flustered as she looked up.

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

None of the three people present moved a muscle. An unbearable silence ensued. The first one to move was Kokage, as she frantically shook her head.

“...You’re wrong.” She was trying to make excuses.

No, it wasn’t even an excuses. Still, Mikado didn’t expect her idiocy to be of such a high level that she could mess up a job as simple as that.

“Kawaraya...san...? Your body is... through the ground you know...?” A husky voice escaped Kisa’s lips.

Kokage desperately tried to escape from the hole she made, but to no avail.

“I’m sorry, Mikado-kun! I couldn’t take a proper picture from the hallway and the sound wasn’t the best quality either, so I thought of doing it from the ceiling! I’m really sorry!”

“H-Hey...” Mikado felt cold sweat run down his cheek.

If she were to keep letting her mouth run like that, Kisa might just find out about his intentions. Sending her a stern gaze and hurrying her to leave the room right this instant, Kokage gave a deep nod, probably meaning ‘Leave it to me!’ or the like.

—No, no need to leave it to you! You just have to take a picture, that’s all!

Mikado tried his best to get this thoughts across to Kokage with the brain waves he was emitting, but with underdeveloped existences like Kokage, they couldn’t even catch that. Instead, she was too

focussed, while being stuck in that hole. She took out the memory card from her camera, and together with the recording app on her smartphone active, she pointed it towards Kisa.

“Kisa-chan! We know that this school is fake! In here is proof of the fact that you abducted Mikado-kun, and me as well! Accept it!”

You weren’t abducted, you snuck into the trunk of the car and ended up as collateral damage!

“Hmm...Is that so...?”

Mikado carefully observed Mikado and Kisa. Although her face was still a bit flushed, her usual calm attitude was visible in her eyes.

“Not bad, Kitamikado-san. On top of seeing through my plan, you acted like you hadn’t caught on and deceived me...That might have ended really badly, indeed.”

As victory escaped his grasp, Mikado desperately tried to pull it back into his hands.

“You just controlled yourself, right? You were about to say ‘I would be more than happy to go out with Kitamikado-san’, weren’t you? So basically, the game is my win.”

Kisa crossed her arms.

“H-Huh?! I was not planning on saying that! I was about to say ‘I would be more than happy to kill Kitamikado-san!’, nothing more!”

“That’s pretty scary! Why would that sentence end up with you killing me?!”

“Isn’t that fine? People are different, and are free to do what they want.”

“It’s not fine! And Japan isn’t that free of a country!”

Mikado didn’t remember coming to America during the pioneering times. But before he could respond, Kisa pushed her fingers right in front of his nose.

“Kitamikado-san, didn’t you say that you were not a good fit for me?! Isn’t that the same as saying that you have feelings for me?!”

“It’s completely different! I never said ‘I like you’ out loud!”

“How sophistic!”

“Who is?!”

“Just accept it and give in!”

“Who would!?”

They glared at each other from a close distance. Their lovebirds atmosphere from before had disappeared and now sparks raced through the air between them. Seeing that, Kokage desperately tried to stop them.

“U-Um, could you stop with the lover’s quarrel...?”

“It’s not a lover’s quarrel!” “It’s not a lover’s quarrel!”

“Eeeeeek?!”

Being glared at by the North and South at the same time, Kokage raised a shriek.

On the way home from the fake school, inside a limousine.

“It was so close...Just one more step, and I would have had Kitamikado-san in the palm of my hand...” Kisa sighed as she looked outside the window.

“So close, right? But, you did your best, Onee-chan! You really did!”

The car was rather spacy, so Mizuki had enough space next to Kisa. She was operating stuff on her smartphone like usual, sometimes raising her head.

“You sure are enjoying yourself...”

“Hmmm? Of course I am! I got a new friend after all!”

“Glad to hear that...”

Although Kisa was slightly intrigued about the identity of said friend, she didn't have the energy to investigate right now. Although the night scenery was sparkling and twinkling everywhere, the inside of Kisa's heart was clouded.

“Why did it end up in failure I wonder...? Mizuki, you didn't tell Kitamikado-san anything weird, right?” Kisa glanced over at her little sister.

“N-No way~ Why would I do that~?”

“Yeah, I'm sure that you must want to keep living for now...”

“Right right! There's lots of characters in the gacha that I haven't gotten yet!”

For some reason, Mizuki fixed her posture as she took a seat further away from Kisa.

“Then...What was the reason that it didn't work out...?”

Kisa was working her head around it.

“F-Forget about that for a second! It's not like today was a complete waste! I mean, Mikado-kun called you cute, right?”

“.....!!!”

Being reminded about that particular fact, Kisa's face went as red as a tomato. She was called cute by Mikado. That Mikado. Several times. She was even praised as beautiful. Even if that was part of his plan, she was happy nonetheless. That gave her enough energy to live another 100 years.

“Ah, Onee-chan! Your face is red!” Mizuki commented in a teasing voice.

“Y-You're wrong...H-He probably didn't...didn't even mean it...”

“Really? I think he might have been pretty serious about that.”

“O-Of course not...It can't be...”

But, it was her maiden's heart that made her want to believe those words to be Mikado's honest feelings.

Mikado and the other two girls were called in by the teachers, forced to apologize for their unannounced absence the day prior, and ordered to clean the reference room.

“Someone from the Kitamikado Family receiving a punishment like this...What a scandal...” Mikado had his head hanging low at the shame that was brought upon him.

“Let's just hurry up and finish this. This simple labour isn't normally anything a Nanjou would do, you know?” Kisa commented in arrogance as she crossed her legs on the teacher's desk.

“Uuuu...Why do even I have to...?” Kokage was close to tears as she complained.

“If you want things to end quickly, then you work as well, Nanjou! You've just been sitting there!”

“But, the one with the brains that is in charge has the job to give out orders right?”

“We don't need someone like that to clean! Move your hands instead!”

“Can't help it...” With a pouting expression, Kisa got down from the teacher's desk, and started moving the brush along the floor.

However, no matter how much she tried to swipe away the dust, it didn't work at all and it didn't look clean even after quite some time had passed. All she did was flush up the dust into the air.

“Why won't this dust move after my will...?!”

“Don't get angry at the dust. You do it like this, watch.” Mikado took the broom from Kisa and swiftly showed her how to use it.

Kisa went silent and just keenly watched that happening. At the

Kitamikado Family, cleaning is part of one's education, but the daughter of the Nanjou Family was probably not needed to clean the house, since they had enough servants.

"Um...Kitamikado-san, there is something I would like to ask..." Kisa awkwardly raised her voice.

"What is it?"

"Before, when you were trying to counterattack me...Was what you said your real feelings?"

"Eh...?" Mikado's hands stopped mid-movement and his eyes turned towards Kisa.

Her ears were slightly reddened and her eyes turned watery.

"S-See, what you said back then...Y-You called me cute...Was that just for your plan? Or was it..."

"I won't tell you."

Mikado didn't have enough endurance to continuously tell that straight to Kisa's face. That day, he was too focussed on winning against Kisa in their game. All the things he remembered he said back then made him want to die out of embarrassment.

"C-Come on! Tell me!"

"I decline. If you don't focus on the cleaning this will never end."

"Please! It won't be related to the game, okay?!"

"No can do. I don't even remember." Mikado shook his head to deny.

"Don't tease me like that! I'll even pay you! One hundred million!"

"I don't need that!"

"If you won't, I'll test you with some truth serum!"

"Do it, it won't work."



“I want to know! Come on, tell me!” Kisa desperately pulled on Mikado’s sleeve as she closed in on him.

The sight of her was as cute as ever and he felt himself wanting her to continue asking him like this. Even so, he kept his mouth shut.

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1 Greek author, who wrote the *Odyssey* for example.

2 Babylonian code of law, dating back to about 1754 BC. Oldest deciphered writings of significant length in the world. Check wikipedia for more lul.



# Chapter 3: Subversive activities

Inside the hallway after classes had ended, the students were enjoying a breather. Sousei Academy had many students from distinguished families, going to school like this gave them a way to relax from the strict family background and activities that they normally had to deal with. Hence, many of them were joyfully joining clubs left and right, and were more than ready to help out in any committee, as long as they could stay at school longer. Naturally, that meant that the school was lively even after classes ended.

“Ara, what a coincidence, Kitamikado-san. To think that we would share the same way home,” said Kisa, as she walked next to Mikado.

“Our entrance to the school is the same after all!”

“To go out of your way and choose the same way home, isn’t this enough to show your affection for me? Can I call this my victory?”

“I just told you, we haven’t even left the school yet!”

Although you might just see this as Mikado being unnecessarily wary, after all that has happened, he couldn’t imagine that Kisa would only attack him on a level like this.

“Yaho! Welcome back, Mikado-kun!”

As the two of them arrived at the student entrance, a cheerful voice greeted them. With her body wrapped in the middle school division’s uniform, Mizuki waved at them with her bag in hand. At the same time, she gathered a few dubious gazes from the other high school students around, she paid it no mind whatsoever.

“Welcome back...? I’m about to go home though.”

“Don’t sweat the small stuff! Since you and Onee-chan are walking home together... it means that, right?! Just when did you start going out?!”

“We never did!” Mikado quickly tried to correct her, but Mizuki didn’t listen to him.

“This must be...the flow of events where we walk home together and play, right?!”

“Eh, really? What should I do...? I haven’t mentally prepared myself...” Kisa awkwardly averted her gaze.

“No, that won’t happen. If someone saw me visit the Nanjou Family’s home, it would cause a great rukus for both our families.”

“We just have to make you wear girl’s clothing, and it wouldn’t be weird at all!”

“My appearance would be weird! There’s no way it would fit me!”

“No no no, it’ll definitely fit you. Right, Onee-chan? You want to see him crossdress as well, don’t you!?”

Kisa flashed a fiendish smile.

“Yeah...I want to see it (The moment where Kitamikado-san falls victim to extreme humiliation) as well.”

“Recently, I feel like I can hear the voice of your heart more and more, Nanjou...”

“Should I introduce you to an excellent doctor (that will brainwash you with medicine), I wonder?”

“I really can hear it, yeah!”

Disregarding that, Mikado could not just walk into the enemy’s lair like that. He couldn’t complain if he was abducted and confined against his will and even if he wasn’t, he would still be surrounded by countless foes.

“Hmmm...then, it’ll be fine as long as it’s not our home, right? Let’s go to Joyful together! The drink bar is open until midnight, you know!?”

“Mizuki...Do you not have any pride as a member of the Nanjou Family?” Kisa clearly was unsure if they were really related.

“Joyful is perfectly fine! I love making a mix out of oolong tea, coffee, and green tea to get my special juice, you know?”

“None of those ingredients are related to juice, right?”

“My feelings are more than enough!”

“It’s not physically in there though.”

“What matters is the thought!”

As the Nanjou sisters were busy fighting, Mikado went ahead and took his shoes out of his locker. He had no experience with going to those so-called family restaurants and although he was very delighted at the thought of spending dinner together with Kisa, that wasn’t an option.

“Sorry about this, but I don’t have any time today. I have to go shopping now.”

“If it’s shopping, then can I tag along?”

“I-I wouldn’t mind accompanying you either.”

“No, it’s with someone from my family. And it’s not the fun kind of shopping.”

Rather, Mikado would ditch it if he could, that’s how unfavorable it was. He was having a face to face meeting with his fiancée for the first time, so he’ll be forced to buy new clothes for that time. Having to prepare for a marriage with a girl he didn’t even have feelings for wasn’t easy food for the soul. However, he had to move according to the head’s orders today. Until the conclusion of the game arrived and he managed to pull Kisa into the Kitamikado Family, he had to be a proper successor.

“Shopping? What are you going to buy?”

“Shh, Onee-chan, you can’t ask that! It’s probably something lewd!”

“I see...I didn’t expect this from you, Kitamikado-san.” Kisa’s eyes were looking at Mikado like he was the scum of the earth.

“Don’t just scorn me like that! And it’s not something lewd!”

Mizuki tilted her head a bit as she thought.

“So a year’s supply of girls’ panties?”

“How many pairs is a year’s supply?!”

“I think that Mikado-kun can’t live without 5 pairs a day, so around 1800?”

“So you wanted that many panties...Kitamikado-san, I’m shocked.”

“I never said a word about wanting that!”

Although he hated being treated like a panties addict, he couldn’t tell them of his real plans. If he did tell them, they’d eventually find out about his first meeting with his fiancée. He couldn’t allow Kisa to become a hindrance, because she would definitely do everything in her might to deny their meeting. Naturally, it’s not like Mikado didn’t appreciate that, since he had no intentions of marrying that girl, but the trouble that came with it would complicate things. If the two families started a full blown war now, it would definitely result in lasting damage.

“Anyway, I’m making the car wait, so I’ll be on my way now.”

“Ehhh, so stingy! No splitting up! Drink bar!”

“Just go there on your own.”

At this point, Mizuki was just acting petty.

“See you later, Kitamikado-san. It’d be great if it turns into a pleasant weekend, right?” Kisa smiled faintly.

Standing in the depths of the bamboo thicket, inside a closed off space of tranquility, there was the traditional Japanese restaurant ‘White Dragon’, offering the highest level of Japanese cuisine, with

select ingredients, created by master chefs exclusively. And, with the incomparable beauty of the waitresses, it only accepted the most influential people of political origin and was sometimes used for discussions that could bring forth a great change in this world. Currently, in one room of this establishment, Mikado was sitting next to his parents.

“We are incredibly grateful that you could come here during your busy day to let us meet Shizukawa-sama.”

The head of the Kitamikado Family, Mikado’s father, bowed deeply. Past the table he was seated at was the head of the financial conglomerate Shizukawa, his wife, and daughter. In response to those words, the head of the Shizukawa Family smiled calmly.

“Don’t be, we have waited a long time for this day to arrive. The two of our families combined will surely restore Japan and turn it back into a strong country of this world.”

A marriage for political reasons. With romantic relationships not being permitted in the Kitamikado Family, marriage formed based on any reason besides politics would not be allowed. This time however, it had a very special reason. The Shizukawa conglomerate had their hands in reliable industries like trains, cars, newspapers even, giving them great influence in Japan. Their own finances are quickly surpassing those of the estimated country’s sum. With the Shizukawa conglomerate who are giants in the industrial world and the Kitamikado Family, who stood at the top of the political pyramid, if those two families were to be intertwined as one they would grow even stronger, becoming very capable of moving Japan all on their own.

“It has been a while. I am Kitamikado Mikado.” Mikado lowered his head at the three people present from the Shizukawa Family.

Being born into a powerful family, meetings with industrially influential families weren’t rare. He had been in contact with the Shizukawa Family before, where he had played with their daughter when they were still at a young age.

Being in the middle of his game with Kisa, this certainly wasn’t the

time for an arranged marriage like this, but he could not report that to his parents yet. For now, he had to play the part of the Kitamikado Family's successor.

“Dear Father-in-law, dear Mother-in-law, dear Mikado-sama, my name is Shizukawa Rinka. I am pleased to make your acquaintance.”

The girl that introduced herself as Rinka bowed down ever so slightly. Just from the looks and tone alone, she gave off the feeling of a Yamato Nadeshiko, the ideal woman. Her jet black hair reached down to her waist and it was sparkling without a single speck of dirt in it. Cool and collected eyes, beautiful eyebrows. Her graceful body was wrapped in a supreme kimono, as she smiled at Mikado. Her neck, sometimes visible through the gaps of her long hair and her slender fingers, was so white it almost seemed transparent. Being the complete opposite of the teasing girl that was Kisa, Rinka had the atmosphere of an angel having descended upon earth.







The head of the Kitamikado Family spoke up.

“Rinka-san, you are at the same age as our Mikado, right? What school are you attending?”

“Shirase Girls Academy.”

It was a school only daughters of noble families attended, a girls' school with an ancient and honorable history. Be it the teachers themselves or the leaders in power, every person involved was in fact a woman, making this school completely shut-off from a world with boys. Sometimes liberally called the ‘Bride School’, people also critique this policy, but demand for the graduates of this school is incredibly high. Just by being a student of this school you gain prestige, hence all the parents that sent their daughters to Shirase Girls' Academy.

Naturally, the head of the Kitamikado Family gave a deep, satisfied nod as he heard that.

“Shirase, huh. That is very relieving to hear. Do you have any hobbies?”

“The qin<sup>1</sup>, and a bit of flower arrangement.”

The head raised his head at Rina's calm response.

“Oho. Now that, I look forward to seeing in the future.”

“It pains me to inform you that my level is that of a mere beginner, so it is nothing I should be showing you.” Rinka replied modestly.

Her every reaction in this conversation was the perfect role model of a wife. Seeing her not rebutting anything and acting out the flawless fiancée, Mikado felt a yawn already begin to leak.

“Mikado-san, what are you planning on doing once you succeed the Kitamikado Family?”

This time it was the head of the Shizukawa, the man who owned hundreds of businesses and employed hundreds of thousands of employees beneath him, voiced a question towards Mikado.

“First, I will eject all the incapable people out of our politics and administration. All the old people that have engraved themselves with relations will disappear from the political stage through the usage of money. What Japan needs the most right now is a

cleansing.”

“Like a purge almost.”

“The footwork in today’s Japan is too heavy. First we have to push out the unwanted luggage. With that done, we can start real change.”

“I see...What if those old people were like me...and your own father?” He asked in a testing manner.

Although he might be smiling, his features weren’t.

—You’ll get crushed if you give a half-assed answer here kiddo, his eyes were speaking for themselves.

Including his own parents, the attention of everyone in the room was directed at mikado. Although the proprietress and the chefs were carrying the food in, their movement stopped as they were hit with the heavy atmosphere.

“Of course I will remove you as well. To bring this country back to its former glory, I cannot hesitate because of my feelings.”

The head of the Shizukawa relaxed his face.

“That’s what I want to hear from the successor of the Kitamikado Family. I feel safe passing my motherland into your hands.”

“Fufu, he’s been trained well in our family.” Mikado’s father laughed.

“Wonderful, Mikado-sama. While being your wife, I will support you with everything I have from the shadows.” Rinka put her hands together, as she commented.

Both the parents of Rinka, as well as Mikado’s own parents were more than pleased with his response. Outside, the flowing of water could be heard on top of the soft twittering of the birds.

—I’m bored, thought Mikado.

Of this place, this atmosphere and this fiance more than anything. He knew that Rinka wasn’t a bad person by all means, but he couldn’t

help but compare her to Kisa. That stimulating and intriguing devilish girl. If it was Kisa, she would never say ‘I want to support Mikado from the shadows. What would sound more like her would be ‘I want to control Mikado from the shadows’. If one were to ask Kisa for her hobbies, she would say ‘thinking up strategies’ and if you told her to play an instrument, she would do her best and flush bright red once you gave her a standing ovation. Being born into the family reigning over the darkness, the Nanjou Family, she instead held incredible radiance, that’s who the young maiden Kisa was.

“Mikado, what’s wrong? It’s pretty rude for you to space out in front of the Shizukawa Family.”

“Ah...Apologies.”

Being scolded by his father, Mikado forcefully separated from his thoughts of Kisa. His mother put her fingers to her mouth and gave a faint snicker.

“Fufu, Rinka-san is so beautiful, so he couldn’t help but gaze at her, right?”

“W-Well, something of the sort.”

Mikado quickly covered it up. He certainly couldn’t blurt out that he was thinking about another girl.

“I am honored, Mikado-sama.”

“Ha ha ha, you two are a good fit I see. Seems like my eyes haven’t failed me yet again.”

“Indeed. I am looking forward to the day when Rinka-san will enter our family as my daughter-in-law.”

Both parents were pleased again. However, Mikado wasn’t looking forward to it in the slightest. He knew very well that the ban on romantic relationships was to lessen the danger of a scandal and he also knew that love can be tempting and blinding. But... a future together with another girl besides Kisa, Mikado really could not imagine it.

Mikado's father turned towards him slightly and spoke up.

"In order for the two of you to get to know each other better, you're fine to take a walk. Mikado, properly escort Rinka-san, will you?"

".....Yeah."

"Please treat me well, Mikado-sama."

Ordered by the head of the Kitamikado Family, Mikado and Rinka left the restaurant.

A bit of a ways away from the restaurant was a wide open park. Unlike the small parks you could find in your neighbourhood, it was a few kilometers wide and resembled a small forest. Said park had a pond, a wide open place, a sports ground, a flower garden, even small stalls and restaurants were open in case one had any wants.

And now Mikado was walking down the alley of trees, next to him was his fiance Rinka. Although this could be seen as his first date with a girl, being here only because of an instruction, Mikado's heart didn't react in the slightest.

— I'm sure that both our parents won't be satisfied if this doesn't take at least two hours...At the very least one hour and 48 minutes from now...

Although it was more than just being rude, Mikado couldn't help but make calculations because he didn't want to stay any longer than he had to. That being said, he wouldn't feel comfortable just wasting those two hours.

"Rinka-san, do you like being outdoors?"

"Yes."

"What places do you like to visit?"

"A lot of places."

"A lot, huh."

“Yes.”

“.....”

“.....”

It's been like this for a while and no proper conversation blossomed. Rinka would leak no information about herself whatsoever and only muttered her replies. Mikado almost thought that his fiance hated him.

—That being said, it would make sense.

This pairing was only decided for Rinka by her parents. There's no way she would have any affection for that person and there might even be a person she has feelings for. However, this being the orders of her family, she had to throw away her own feelings and agree to this marriage, and it's not like Mikado couldn't understand her feelings.

Mikado let out a sigh. In response, Rinka whispered in an unsure tone.

“I-I'm sorry...You must be...bored...”

“No, that's not it, but...”

Letting out a sigh during a date was indeed bad manners on his part.

“I'm just a bit...nervous...I don't know what to talk about...Even though I was looking forward to talking with you on this very day, Mikado-sama...”

“Looking forward to...? To this meeting arranged by your parents?”

“Is that...not good?” Rinka looked up at Mikado, her gaze filled with worry.

Her small hands were pressed together tightly. If only Kisa was this honest, Mikado caught himself thinking yet again.

“Ummm...I'm happy that you were looking forward to it this

much...”

But, he wasn't sure how to interpret that. They haven't had many interactions recently, so her reason for looking forward to this was a mystery to Mikado.

“.....?”

Rinka tilted her head at Mikado's silence. In the past, he had met the girl at parties and the like, but those memories were more vague than anything. Not to mention that unlike the young girl she was back then, she had grown into a fine flower.

“Mikado-sama, do you...dislike this whole marriage arrangement?”

“No, it's not about hating it...”

“That's a lie.” Rinka said, like she had seen through a child's dishonesty.

“Mikado-sama, you were always distracted today. You're not looking at me at all.”

“That's...”

Sharp. Maybe this is what a woman's intuition is capable of, Mikado pondered.

“It seems like...you already have someone you like.”

But, there was no resentment in Rinka's voice.

“I don't want to force you to respond to me. I am well aware of your feelings Mikado-sama. But...knowing of this meeting today, I was very much looking forward to it.”

“I'm sorry...” Mikado felt a great amount of guilt burning inside him.

Although it was set up by his parents, the person herself wasn't unbearable in the slightest. He sure enough couldn't lie to his own feelings, but seeing that she had been anticipating this, he wanted her to enjoy herself at the very least. That is the responsibility that

the serious Mikado felt. Taking out his smartphone, Mikado checked the surroundings and decided on where to go next.

“...For now, how about we go to a more open place? It seems like they have a flower garden here as well.”

“Okay...” Rinka answered, as she turned around for a second.

“What’s wrong?”

“I feel like someone has been trailing us for a while now...”

“Trailing...?”

As he traced Rinka’s gaze, Mikado spotted rustling bushes in the distance. What caught his eye past that was the lens of a camera, a well-endowed chest and familiar sharp eyes.

— It’s you again, Kawaraya?!

Mikado screamed out inside his chest. Hiding in the trunk of his car to spy on him, she sure was the egg of a family of information gatherers, but her actions were too unpredictable and her energy way too high for Mikado’s taste.

“Well, I don’t think that there is a big problem with that...”

Disregarding the scenery of what would happen if it was Kisa, even if she found proof of him taking a walk with his fiancée, that wouldn’t trouble Mikado in the slightest. On the contrary, if that was leaked, the Kitamikado and Shizukawa Family would be more pleased than ashamed.

“Is there not, I wonder...?”

“She’s a perpetrator that often tails me. Peeping pictures, spying, wiretapping, stalking and much more, yeah, but she doesn’t hurt anybody while doing so.”

Though it might have sounded a bit insulting, the scary part about Kokage was that it wasn’t a lie in the slightest.



“Even with all that, there really isn’t any damage? Mikado-sama, you are far too kind, we should be calling the police instead.”

“N-No, I don’t want to turn this into a ruckus...”

She was a classmate after all, or so Mikado wanted to argue. However, he held off on that because he didn’t want to worry Rinka as to what kind of class he was actually in.

“Is that really the case I wonder...?” Rinka’s face grew a bit pale.

Unlike the Nanjou siblings who were born and raised in this world, Rinka was a normal girl, only born into a rich family, so this whole situation no doubt must be a bit tough on her.

“Then, how about we run away?”

“Eh—?”

Mikado grabbed Rinka by the wrist and started running. Kokage panicked as she went to chase after them, but the belt of her camera got stuck in the bushes, leaving her unable to move for a few seconds.

“U-Um, Mikado-sama?!”

“It’s fine, just follow me.”

Mikado pulled Rinka into the corner of a shadow, hiding both their bodies. Still having her wrist held by Mikado, Rinka grew stiff like she was frozen and held her breath.

“Ahhhh?! Where did Mikado-kun go?!”

With the branches of the trees stuck in her hair, Kokage ran along the way with her camera in hand. Having jumped out of the bushes, her shirt was half-pulled down to her shoulders and the upper buttons were opened, revealing a bit too much of her white skin, which gathered the attention of people passing her.

“Mama, there’s a pervert over there!”

“Don’t point at her or she’ll jump at you!”

Mikado even heard the exchange between a mother and child. As Kokage’s back was finally out of sight, Mikado and Rinka stepped out from the shadows.

“That was really heart-racing...” Rinak said, as she put one hand on her chest.

“I’m sorry, suddenly grabbing you like that.”

“N-No! I didn’t mind that at all!” She quickly shook her head.

“Rather, this is the first time that a male has ever taken the lead like this with me... And it was Mikado-sama of all people... I thought my heart would stop. Of course, not in the bad sense.”

“I-Is that so...?”

“Yes...I was...very happy.”

Yet again, her reserved, yet flustered way of behaving gave her the vibe of a Yamato Nadeshiko. Her face was burning red. Seeing this, even Mikado grew a bit embarrassed.

“So you always take the lead with girls like this, Mikado-sama.”

“No, that’s not the case. Romantic relationships are prohibited in the Kitamikado Family.”

“That’s a lie. You are weirdly used to this, aren’t you?” Rinka pouted slightly. “Mikado-sama...my hair has gotten a bit ruffled so would you mind if I went to fix it?”

“Please do.”

“I’ll be right back.”

Giving a short explanation, Rinka walked off to a nearby toilet. On the way, her jet-black hair radiated against the sunlight. Maybe if he hadn’t met Kisa before, he would have been able to develop feelings

for Rinka, marry her and build a normal family.

—Anyway... the biggest priority is to let this meeting end safely.

And it happened just as he thought that.

“My, if it isn’t Kitamikado-san. What a coincidence to meet you here.”

With a fiendish smile, she appeared like a fairy.

“You...Why are you always meddling in other people’s businesses like this...?”

Mikado felt all the strength leave his body.

“Eh, what? Am I being praised here?”

The girl flashing her usual teasing smile was none other than Nanjou Kisa. The most troublesome existence he could have run into.

“As if that was meant as praise! I have some important business here, so let’s meet again next week! Arrivederci!”

With those words, Mikado cast his gaze downwards as he leaned against the wall of the building. While doing so, Kisa stood next to him in front of the wall.

“Why are you still here?!”

“Because you looked like you definitely didn’t want me to stay?”

“Are you the devil?!”

“Yes, indeed I am. Seeing Kitamikado-san troubled like this is what I love the most in this world.” Kisa snickered.

Today, the girl was even cuter than usual. Right now, she wore a very feminine black one-piece, not missing the frills and laces. Pairing that with black knee-socks going above her knees and black high heels, it was a perfect contrast to her snow-white skin. A black spangle hair accessory decorated her head and she had a cute

shoulder bag designed after a cat's face hanging down her back. Having properly coordinated her hair style, Kisa gave off the atmosphere of a small, black cat. It looked like she had put a lot of effort into it, like she was on the way to an important date.

"What are you doing here, Kitamikado-san?"

"Nothing special. Just taking a walk."

"Then I'll join you for that walk."

"No, I'll be going on my way alone."

"Then I will be walking after you, also alone."

"That still makes it the two of us!"

"You don't have to pay too much mind to it. I'll keep a distance of 5cm."

"That's pretty close if you ask me! Makes it even more awkward than if we were walking next to each other!"

Mikado panicked. The longer he kept talking with Kisa, the higher the risk that Rinka might return and see. If Kisa were to find out that Mikado was out on a meeting with his fiance, she would definitely try to obstruct it at all costs. Naturally, if the Shizukawa Family found out that Mikado was unnecessarily close with Kisa, that would equally spell trouble. He could definitely not allow the two girls to meet. At least not with Mikado present.

"What's wrong, Kitamikado-san? You're sweating quite profusely."

"It's pretty hot today after all..."

"Is that so? I feel like it's more on the soothing side."

"...Hey, if I asked you to leave me alone just for today, what would you do?"

"Stay by your side at all costs!"

“Figures... If I asked you to give up?”

“I’d definitely not give up!”

Kisa’s eyes were sparkling, a very lovable expression. But at the same time, Mikado didn’t have the leisure to enjoy that, as he was racking his head on what to do now.

—For now, keeping Kisa away from Rinka-san holds the utmost priority.

Arriving at that conclusion, Mikado decided on the most effective way of achieving that.

“Can’t help it then. Let’s take a walk together.”

“Very well! I wanted to feed the kois and birds at the pond anyway!” Kisa happily nodded along.

—So Nanjou even says cute stuff like that. She really is a girl.

Mikado once again had to correct his view of her.

“Fu fu fu, so you want your food that desperately...? How gluttonous you are. Look, even I am showing sympathy to you. If you aren’t thankful, I will step on you.”

As Kisa was laughing to herself, she scattered the (100 yen) fodder. Spotting that, the kois in the pond were frantically swimming towards the surface.

“How much more do you want to eat? But, I can’t say I dislike servants that are true to their desires...”

The servants (kois) were flapping their mouths open as they swam at the surface, waiting for more fodder. Putting a coin in the vending machine at the bank of the pond, Kisa took out a small capsule.

“I was an idiot to even think of you as cute...” Mikado muttered.

Kisa being girly, heavens no. No matter who it was, Nanjou Kisa was the same Nanjou Kisa as ever.

“Eh, what did you just say?” Kisa turned around to face Mikado with an un-Nanjou-like expression, almost innocent, as she tried to get the fodder out of the capsule.

“No, nothing...”

Yet again, Mikado barely held himself back from directly calling her cute.

“You called me cute right now, didn’t you?”

“I didn’t.”

“You did.”

“I didn’t.”

Mikado desperately tried to deny it, but Kisa didn’t give up that easily.

“You definitely did! I have enough confidence to hear that even in the darkest parts of this world, if Kitamikado-san calls me cute!”

“Those are some sharp ears you have there...” Mikado sighed.

—Eh, wait, doesn’t this mean that she gets happy if I call her cute?! Is that it?! So Nanjou does...No no, it’s still too early for that.

Mikado told himself that he had too much self-confidence there and couldn’t act rashly. Normally, he’s calm and collected about this sort of stuff, but as soon as it involves Kisa, he can’t help but be reckless. In the meantime, Kisa started waving her index finger at him.

“I tell you, I haven’t misheard...You definitely said it...That I am the cutest living being existing in the entire universe.”

“I never said that much!”

Mikado gazed at the clock in the park. Around 10 minutes had passed since they left the place where he split up with Rinka, so she should be returning soon from the toilet. If he doesn’t get back soon, she

might think that she was stood up. And right then, the ringtone of an incoming call resounded from Mikado's smartphone...Inside Kisa's bag.

"Ara."

Kisa took out Mikado's phone from her bag like it was the most normal thing in the world.

"Hold on a damn second! This is definitely weird! Why do you have my phone?!"

Mikado screamed at her, a mixture of panic and confusion filling his voice, but Kisa didn't pay that any heed. She just pressed the phone button and accepted the call.

"Yes, hello? Eh...? Who am I? Nobody worth mentioning. Where is Mikado-sama you say? What might you be talking about? You know, I don't like it when people pull prank calls like this. Yes, I feel very offended right now."

"When did you steal it?! Hurry and give it back!"

"Can't you wait a second? I'm in the middle of an important call right now. Though, I don't know this person."

"If you don't know her, then don't act like it's an important call!"  
Mikado succeeded in stealing back the phone.

He immediately put it to his ear and whispered while hiding his mouth.

"Hello, Kitamikado here."

'Ah, Mikado-sama!'

He certainly hoped that it wasn't her, but the person that answered his voice was without a doubt Rinka. Since being separated while going to the park would have been bad, they had exchanged contacts once they stepped out of the restaurant, but Mikado didn't anticipate that it'd stab him in the back like this.

“I’m sorry, I happened to step away from the toilet. I’ll be right back.”

‘No, I was the one to make you wait. It must have been boring to wait for me.’

An apologetic voice arrived at Mikado’s ear, making him start a sweat out of guilt and frustration. But, Kisa completely ignored that and just brought her ear closer to the phone as well so that she could listen in.

“H-Hey...”

“Shhh...she’ll be able to hear you.” As Mikado glared at her, Kisa put her index finger on her lip and whispered.

Being this close, Kisa’s shoulders were about to touch Mikado’s. The long tips of her hair tickled his cheek and he felt his own heart beat accelerate fiercely. The sweet aroma that came flying over from her directly toyed with his reason. Before the situation grew too dangerous, Mikado protected his phone as he quickly separated from Kisa. While feeling a bit frustrated at not being able to enjoy her contact a bit more, he yet again focussed on the ongoing phone call.

“No, I’m the one at fault. Wait over there for a bit, I’ll be right back.”

‘No need for that. I would feel bad making you do all the moving, so I will come towards you. Where are you right now?’

“That’s...Ummm...a bit difficult to explain...”

Kisa waved her hand at Mikado with a smile, as he looked up at her. Explaining his location was no big feat, but there were certain circumstances that made it more difficult.

‘Is that so...Then, who was that girl that responded on the phone just now...?’

“That’s also a bit difficult to explain...”

Mikado started sweating more profusely, while Rinka continued in a heavy manner.



‘It sounded like a very adorable girl. Around the same age as me... Is she an acquaintance of Mikado-sama...?’

“Acquaintance...Well...”

He wasn’t able to find a fitting excuse. To be frank, Mikado was always bad at covering things up, or lying even. If the other person was someone proper like Rinka, he felt an even greater resistance. Although things were different if it was Kisa.

‘Is that so...? Then, Mikado-sama I will be waiting here, so make sure to return quickly.’

And even now, she acted as the perfect Yamato Nadeshiko, not prying any further.

“Yes...I’m really sorry about this.”

Mikado reflexively bowed down while ending the phone call. He then proceeded to hang up and let out a long sigh.

“...Hey, Kitamikado-san. Who might the girl that you were on the phone with just now be?” With a grin, Kisa immediately closed the distance between her and Mikado.

It seemed like another hell awaited him before he could even return.

“Let me be clear with this... She isn’t a girl.”

“But you’re calling them ‘She’?”

“Ugh... She is but... it’s complicated...”

“That follow-up didn’t help you that much, Kitamikado-san.” Kisa calmly pointed out.

“Were you on a date with someone today? While having me, Kitamikado-san? Leaving aside the enemy of your love game, you’ve been out playing with another cute girl?” Kisa poked Mikado’s cheek.

Although the gesture was adorable, her eyes were mad. Rather, they were serious.

“I wasn’t playing with anyone...”

Mikado carefully chose his words. Since this was actually his fiancée, him not playing around was the truth.

“I see... So you’re properly going out. Even though you have me.”  
Kisa got the wrong idea completely.

Now Mikado had almost no chance to run away anymore.

“I’m sorry, but this is related to my family so I have to go no matter what... I’ll be seeing you at school...”

“No can do.” Kisa tightly grasped Mikado’s hand.

Feeling the cool, yet also soft and warm touch of her hand, Mikado could feel his face getting hotter.

—She could just do that any other time! Why now?!

Mikado cried out tears of blood inside his heart.

“I want to see that person as well. Kitamikado-san, you’ll certainly introduce me, right?”

“Don’t ask for the impossible!”

“Why? Would it be that bad for me to meet her?”

“N-Not really...”

Mikado swallowed his words. Mainly because it would be incredibly bad. There would be no merit whatsoever for him.

“Then there should be no problem, right? I’ll be docile and I’ll make sure that she stays docile during our game as well...”

“You’re going to eradicate her or something?! I really can’t let you meet her!”

“Not eradicate, just educate her a bit...”

“Is that really that much better?!”

“But...But...”

While tightly holding Mikado’s hand, Kisa muttered. Her eyes were watery and almost despairing, as she glared at Mikado. Seeing that sent a current of pain through his chest. Naturally, this might all just be her acting during the game. She might only be showing sadness to lull in her target. But even so, Mikado didn’t want to keep watching a saddened Kisa like this. After letting out a sigh, Mikado spoke up.

“It’s not someone that will bother our game, so don’t mind it. I won’t quit your game halfway through. The other party is just an acquaintance from my parents.”

“She’s your fiance Shizukawa Rinka-san, right?”

“?!?!?” Mikado was at a loss for words.

Kisa let go of Mikado’s hand and put one finger on her beautiful lips as she smiled.

“Ara, was I wrong? After the initial meeting of the Shizukawa conglomerate with the Kitamikado Family at 11am in the restaurant ‘White Dragon’, the two of you moved to this park. You probably went to take a walk to deepen your relationship. You went shopping for new clothes for this very day, right? That time you said you went shopping. By the way, you brought the new clothes from ‘Bloomani’, in the store next to the Arakawa station, didn’t you?”

“Why...?”

Do you have my schedule perfectly marked down—? Mikado was about to ask, but couldn’t force it out of his throat. Because of the shock, just opening and closing his mouth like a fish was the best he could manage.

“Wow, you’re just like the koi fish in the pond. There is no way that I would not have the schedule of my enemy marked down to the greatest detail. Anyway, you’ll introduce me to your fiance Rinka-san, right?”

“What are you planning to do... once I do...?” Mikado took a step back.

In response, Kisa took a step towards him.

“You don’t have to be so wary. I just want to become a bit more familiar with her...Yeah, that’s really really really really really really really really really all there is to it!”

“The amount of ‘reallys’ in there makes it more suspicious than anything!”

Mikado ran. He ran away at max speed, never turning around once.

“I’ve... returned...I’m sorry...for making you...wait like this...”

Having arrived at the toilet where they separated, Mikado apologized to Rinka with his breathing out of rhythm. He could barely stay standing by supporting himself with one hand on a nearby tree, but sweat was dripping down his forehead like a waterfall. Because Kisa kept chasing him for awhile, he had to run at his maximum speed to escape her and was now completely burned up.

“You seem to be really tired, did something happen?”

“Ummm...I had to work overtime a bit...”

“Overtime...”

“Yes, overtime...”

That excuse made him sound like a cheating husband, but Mikado couldn’t come up with anything else. However, Rinka smiled down at him like a goddess, as she put her hands together.

“I see, so that’s what it was. I was worried that something might have happened to you, Mikado-sama.”

“You believe me?!”

“Of course I do. It’s a wife’s job to have faith in her husband. Even if you were sleeping in the same bed as another woman, I would still

believe you, Mikado-sama.”

“No, you should doubt that...” Mikado’s guilt heightened even further. “Then, let us walk to the flower garden. I will guide you.”

“Yes, please take me there.” Rinka nodded happily and lined up next to Mikado.

The sun filtering through the trees illuminated certain spots on the ground as the two of them walked along the line of trees. Mikado didn’t even have to match his speed with Rinka, because she was always next to him, matching her own speed to his. When Mikado would speak up, Rinka answered him, but she maintained a quiet smile once Mikado got silent. That was the atmosphere she gave off. A girl to honor and praise the boy, not ever becoming a bother for him.

Mikado could already see the calm and enjoyable life he would have if he took Rinka into the family as his wife. Peaceful, nothing rampant, just being able to focus on work, the ideal lifestyle for a man. But something, or rather someone, violently pulled him out of his thoughts.

“Ara, Kitamikado-san! So you were here! How cruel of you to just leave me behind!”

It was the personification of chaos and disorder walking towards him. With a radiant smile, she stopped in front of the two.

“.....!”

Mikado took a step back.

“Mikado-sama? Who is this person?” Rinka tilted her head.

He should have properly shaken off Kisa already, but apparently he was too naive in thinking that. And now that the two of them have met, he couldn’t pass their relationship off as just mere acquaintances, so he loosed a fed-up sigh.

“She’s a classmate from the Sousei Academy I’m attending. Her name

is Ki—”

“Kitamikado-san! You’re being too cold! I’m Nanjou Kisa!” Kisa forced herself in between Mikado’s phrase.

“Eh...Nanjou...Don’t tell me...From *the* Nanjou family...?” Rinka was clearly flustered.

Having been in contact with the Kitamikado Family for a long time, the Shizukawa Family were well informed about their rivalry with the Nanjou Family.

“Haha, please don’t joke around—” Mikado panicked.

“Yes, that Nanjou Family! Being in his rival family, I am Kitamikado Mikado’s arch nemesis...That is me, Nanjou Kisa. But, as of right now, we’re classmates...very, very close and friendly classmates.” Kisa giggled confidently.

“W-Why would you emphasize the close part...?”

“Because it’s the truth! We’re almost always together during the day, you know? Since we’re in the same committee, we have to work together all the time. We are spending more time together than with our respective parents!”

Rinka’s body started to shake ever so slightly.

“S-Spending more time together than with your parents... So you are basically family...?”

“Exactly!”

“Excuse me?! What are you just agreeing to here?!”

As the situation grew more confusing, Mikado threw Kisa a sharp glare.

—You, are you planning on completely breaking up the marriage talk?!

—Of course I am!

Kisa returned a glare. They were now fully capable of holding a conversation via eye contact alone. Rinka watched the two of them, looking worried.

“You seem to be...fairly familiar with each other...”

Kisa shrugged her shoulders.

“At the very least, I’m closer to him than the person his parents decided for him is. Unlike a certain someone, we’re talking in informal language<sup>2</sup>.”

“.....!” Rinka’s hands formed fists.

The calm and collected girl from before had vanished, anger and rage took her place.

“Mikado-sama!”

“Yes!”

Mikado unconsciously stood straighter as he was called out.

“Please talk normally to me as well! Using formal language with your future wife is something I cannot stand!”

“But, we just barely met...”

“Not just barely! Haven’t you played with me ever since we were young!? Just speak to me normally! I beg of you!” Rinka was incredibly serious.

In response to that, Kisa muttered a surprised “Ohh~” with an intriguing expression.

“A-Alright, I get it, Rinka-san. From now on, I’ll talk normally with you.”

“Your way of addressing me as well! Call me Rinka! Otherwise I won’t feel like I’m worthy of standing side to side with the future head of the Kitamikado Family!” Rinka pushed her body forward.

Mikado was overpowered as her beautiful gemstone-like eyes gazed straight at him. After gulping once, he nervously responded.

“I-I get it...Rinka.”

“Ah...” Rinka’s cheeks went red. “T-That is fine then...How do I say it, it’s a bit embarrassing...”

Seeing that kind of reaction, even Mikado felt the blood rushing to his head.

“U-Um, it seems like you’re still speaking very formally, Rinka...?”

“I-I don’t mind it... I don’t want to be treated like a ruffian by Mikado-sama...”

“Is that so...?”

Inside the center of this park, the two of them were wrapped up in an awkward and embarrassing atmosphere.

—Hey hey...isn’t she pretty cute as well...?

Even though the other party was decided by his parents, Mikado couldn’t help but feel that way. After exhaling a deep sigh, Rinka turned her gaze away from Mikado onto Kisa.

“How about that? We are calling each other by name now. What about you? Nanjou-san, you’re still calling Mikado-sama by his family name, are you not?”

“Ughhh...” Kisa grit her teeth.

And Rinka wasn’t done with her attack.

“No matter how close you are, Mikado-sama and Nanjou-san are just normal classmates...You aren’t lovers or anything. There is a wall that you can’t overcome no matter what.”

“T-That’s not true! If it was necessary, I’d break through any cell wall in his body to move forward! Even the inner wall of his stomach! That’s how prepared I am!”



“I would die if you did that though!”

But, Rinka wouldn’t waver even after such a ridiculous attack.

“What about the wall in his heart? You are still calling him ‘Kitamikado-san’, right?”

“Ah, no, wait! I’ll do something about that right now!” Kisa put one hand on her chest and took a deep breath.

She then turned over to Mikado, and spoke up in a loud voice.

“Mi-Mimi—Mimimimimimi...”

“Mimi?” Rinka tilted her head in confusion.

She probably wanted to call him by his first name, but couldn’t make it past the first syllable. At this point, she was just an ear<sup>3</sup> fanatic, nothing more.

“Mi...Mimimimi...Mika...Mika...Ahh, I can’t!” Kisa’s face went as red as a tomato as she hid it with her hands, crouching down on the ground.

“Ehh.....?” Rinka was dumbfounded.

Kisa started shaking furiously.

—What is this? She’s way too cute!

Mikado complained. At first, Mikado thought that she was calling him by his family name to keep the feeling of distance they had, but that wasn’t the case. It was out of embarrassment. Even now, Mikado was unsure if she was bold or tender. Kisa slowly got up from her crouching position and pointed at Rinka with her index finger.

“D-Don’t think that you’ve won because of this! I haven’t taken any damage yet! There is no way I would give in to a dark horse that invaded our game!” She got teary-eyed.

“Game...? Dark horse...?” Rinka’s expression was the reflection of

her confusion.

“Now that it’s come to this, it’s time for a duel! Whoever can win over Kitamikado-san first! The time frame will be during this date! We will walk around the park as a group and bring an end to this!”

“I-I won’t lose! Mikado-sama is my precious future husband! I will not allow him to fall into the Nanjou Family’s hands!”

Sparks flew between the two girls. On one side, the Yamato Nadeshiko, akin to a narcissus blooming by the lake shore. On the other side, the fascinating devilish queen. On both sides, be it their looks or their aura, there weren’t many that could match their beauty.

“Why was it just decided that we’ll be going on a date with the three of us...?” Mikado was bewildered.

The three of them headed to the wide open space they decided upon. The area was surrounded by a big lawn, with several other guests relishing their holiday. There were families playing with a ball and others that put down a sheet on the grass and were enjoying a nice picnic. On top of that, seniors taking a normal walk and young boys just gazing up at the sky were also present. It was a soothing atmosphere to watch, with a calm breeze and passing clouds that dotted the otherwise beautiful blue sky. Or rather, that’s what they should have been enjoying, but...

“Fu fu fu...so, how about we start with a battle of girl power...?”

“You say girl power, but you probably mean showing our feminine charm, right? If it’s about that, the girl of the Shizukawa Family, me, will not lose!”

Both Kisa and Rinka showed ferocious motivation, generating a tense atmosphere.

—Was Rinka ever the aggressive type...?

When Mikado spotted her at parties or the like and during their meeting at the restaurant, he had had the impression that she was a calm and docile girl. However, being able to show great fighting

spirit when it came down to it is what made her even more Yamato Nadeshiko-like. And, right when he thought that, an old lady walked towards them with a dachshund.

“Now, the first battle! We will show our girl power in our reaction towards that animal! Naturally, Kitamikado-san will be the judge!”

“...Eh, me?”

“Of course! Who else could be the judge for us? Shizukawa-san, have you prepared yourself?”

“Yes...I have finished my mental preparations.” Rinka gave a mysterious nod.

Her presence and dignity was akin to a Taisho period female, wielding a naginata into battle<sup>4</sup>. Even a hakama<sup>5</sup> would fit her perfectly, Mikado thought.

“Then...ready, and...go!”

At Kisa’s command, the two started dashing. In this battle...the first one that gets to the dachshund will be the winner!—Or so they believe, hence explaining their insane dash. Though it is true that the first person to arrive has the freedom of choice. Because the person arriving after can’t take the same approach again, it puts them at a disadvantage. As a result, the two of them grew desperate. They ran like their lives depended on it... Naturally, for the dachshund, the two of them were like giants attacking him, so—

“Bark Bark!” It made sense that the poor dog ran for his life.

Following that was the old lady, as she was pulled along by the dog’s leash.

“Old people recently sure are fit for their age...”

Mikado watched the back of the old lady grow more distance, as he muttered in admiration. At the same time, Kisa and Rinka were left in confusion.

“Why did it run away I wonder...? It must have been because

Shizukawa-san is too scary!”

“That’s not true! It must have felt the killing intent coming from Nanjou-san!”

“No, it’s both your faults!”

Mikado felt like he saw a completely new side to Rinka today. And, as they kept walking for a while, they finally arrived at the flower garden. The flowers were both rich in color and beautiful, giving off a sweet aroma as if to greet the travelers.

Kisa laughed confidently.

“Now, Shizukawa-san. Show me your girl power. That dog just now was nothing but a small obstacle... Being put in front of these flowers is where your true girl power is supposed to shine!”

“I feel like that couldn’t even be counted as a small obstacle... But, I understand!”

Rinka tightened her expression and leaned over inside the flower garden. Her posture was dignified and she was careful not to dirty her kimono in any way. Her slender hand reached for a white flower and pulled it towards her. She then softly closed her eyes and enjoyed the scent of the flower, smiling.

“Mikado-sama, their scent is wonderful. Please, come over here.”

“Y-Yeah...”

Mikado couldn’t stay strong against that way of calling him over, even if he had to cross a river by swimming through it to get to her, he’d gladly do it. However, Kisa crossed her arms.

“Zero points! Out of 10 billion points, that’s a complete zero!”

“And why is that?!”

Having been denied by Kisa, Rinka raised her voice in disbelief. Kisa

responded with a snort.

“You’re still naive if you even have to ask for the reason! If you can’t arrive at the answer yourself, you don’t have permission to boast about your girl power! That’s minus 50 billion points!”

“What kind of grading system is this?! Please properly explain it to me!”

Rinka was bewildered, but Mikado judged that it was probably just a whim of Kisa’s. And on top of that, Mikado was supposed to be the judge but Kisa got the jump on him. Again, that was probably just because of her mood.

“Then, watch my perfect example... My girl power, admired by the whole galaxy!”

“Y-Yes...”

“You sure put up quite the hurdle for yourself just now...”

Rinka and Mikado swallowed their saliva in suspense, as they watched over Kisa. With all that big talk, you’d expect something overwhelming, even if you didn’t want to. Kisa took out her smartphone from her bag, operated it for a second and put it against one ear.

“Do you have a helicopter at your disposal right now? I won’t accept no as an answer. Yeah, can you bring a flamethrower here? What do I need to use it for? To burn down a flower garden of course! Hurry up! You have 3 minutes!”

“What are you doiiiiing?!” Mikado jumped at Kisa in panic.

Stealing her phone, he immediately cut the call.

“Why would you stop me!? I was in the middle of the phone call!”

“Why are you trying to burn down the flower garden?! Are you a demon or something?!”

“Burning down a flower garden is the perfect way to show my

feminine charm! Do you not understand that?!”

“I sure don’t!”

“Please do! Try to understand my feelings!”

“I really really want to, but that still doesn’t help me!”

To make sure that she couldn’t reach it, Mikado held his hand with the smartphone up high above him. In response to that, Kisa tried her best to reach it while jumping.

“Just give it back already! I’ll definitely kill you if you look at my data! And everyone that is related to you as well!”

Her acting desperate was also cute in Mikado’s eyes, but her threatening, not as much. Just Mikado was one thing, but all the people related to him weighed down on him quite a bit.

“I don’t mind giving it back, but you better promise. That you won’t set the flower garden on fire and that you’ll properly explain the reason why you were trying to.”

“I-I understand! I will give up on burning it today!”

“Not just today, but for all eternity, alright?! Do not dare burn this down, okay?!”

As Mikado emphasized that, he returned the phone to Kisa, who let out a relieved sigh after she safely stuffed it deep into her bag. Thoroughly closing off every possible opening of the bag, she tightly grasped it with both her hands to protect it.

—Just what kind of data is in there?

Seeing this many security measures, even Mikado couldn’t help but get curious. However, opening Pandora’s Box would lead to a great calamity, so he decided to hold off on that. After she calmed herself down, Kisa coughed once to start the conversation anew.

“...See, girls cannot allow anything else to exist that is more beautiful and admirable than them, right? That’s why, whenever I see a

beautiful flower, I just feel like stepping on it... No, wanting to eradicate it from the face of this earth is a completely natural reaction! A flamethrower is a girl's strength!"

"That is not true!" Rinka denied that argument at full force.

"No, I am not in the wrong! Even the queen in the fairy-tale tried to kill Snow White, right?! Basically, beauty has its price... The beauty of everyone around you, that is!"

"You know that the queen was supposed to be the bad guy, right...?" Once again, Mikado was astonished at the fiendishness of the Nanjou Family.

At the same time, Kisa glanced at a family who were currently taking a stroll through the open field.

"Now, let's continue the battle. There is a cute baby in that buggy over there... We will measure our girl power with that gem of beauty. Yes, our deadly girl power!"

"Can we drop the whole deadly and killing part already?!"

"I-It's fine already! I don't need a competition about girl power anymore!" Rinka went pale.

She was scared that Kisa might pull out the flamethrower against that innocent baby.

"Ara, you're giving up now? That means that you have accepted defeat, doesn't it? I can still fight after all."

"Uu...Y-Yes, I accept my defeat..."

"What a shame. For the last battle, I was planning on a girl power punch death battle..."

"What do girl power and death battle have in common for you to bring them up now?! You're completely disregarding the whole reason for this!" Rinka was about to break out in tears out of shock and frustration.

“Kitamikado-san! I won! I did it! I have more girl power after all!” Kisa’s eyes were sparkling as she reported to Mikado.

“Good for you...”

–You win the battle, but lose the war, I guess.

Mikado thought to himself, as Kisa won the girl power match, with not a single fraction of girl power inside her.

Being guided by Kisa, Mikado and Rinka arrived at a cliff with an observation platform. Close to it were several stalls, offering great menus. Around them were several benches to rest on, already occupied by families, couples, or just groups of girls, all eating ice cream to take a break. Having walked for quite a distance, Rinka spoke up to Mikado, slightly out of breath.

“I’m sorry, Mikado-sama, I have gotten a bit tired... I would be delighted if we could take a short break here...”

Kisa raised her eyebrow at that.

“How troublesome...Why are you so tired...? Whose fault might this be...?”

“It’s clearly yours, Nanjou!”

Although it might have been a bit dull, if Mikado and Rinka spent these two hours alone, their calorie consumption would have been significantly lower than now with Kisa. Being constantly on edge wondering when she might call an armed helicopter or when this beautiful park might be wrapped up in a sea of fire, Mikado had his hands full with keeping the reins on Kisa.

“For now, we can take a break. They have some delicious looking stuff here anyway.”

“Thank you very much.” Rinka put one hand on her chest as she sighed in relief.

For someone like her from a prestigious, dignified rich ladies school,



this time spent with Kisa must be tough on her in a lot of ways.

“I want to eat some crepes! Let’s try it out, the crepes!”

“I don’t really like sweet stuff that much, but it should be fine once in a while...”

Or so Mikado said, but he always admired the food called crepe. As someone from the Kitamikado Family that loved Japan, sweets-wise, a dango dumpling shop was the limit for him. He never tried these kinds of girly sweet foods. Mikado took out his wallet from his pocket.

“What do you want, Rinka?”

“I will have the same as Mikado-sama.” She responded like it was obvious.

“Hold on a second! If Kitamikado-san said that he would eat dog food, so would you?!”

“Of course.”

“Is this your duty as a wife?! Are wives there to eat dog food?!” Kisa was shaking in fear.

“When did it turn into an established fact that I’m eating dog food?!”

“It’s fine, Mikado-sama. If you order me to, I wouldn’t mind eating cat food either, so don’t refrain from saying which you prefer.”

For some reason, Rinka’s eyes were a bit scary.

“No...this isn’t an order or anything. You can eat whatever you want.”

“If Mikado-sama says so, then I will take it into my own hands to choose.” Rinka walked towards him.

Naturally, Mikado didn’t mind silent following, but there were limits even for him. Now, Mikado and the others were lining up in front of the shop, ordering what they wanted. Kisa chose blackberry custard,

Mikado chose the beef cheese and Rinka had the strawberry cream. Then, when it came to paying.

“I’ll be the one to pay.”

“I’ll be the one to pay.”

Mikado and Kisa held up their wallets at the same time, which resulted in a current running between them.

“Um...Kitamikado-san? Establishing dominance by treating us isn’t going to work out, you know? Just from this, someone from the Nanjou Family won’t feel like there’s any debt to repay and I’m not going to be moved by this or anything... So just let me treat you.” Kisa glared at Mikado.

“Being treated by Nanjou is like giving away my soul... So I’d rather not. If you don’t feel like this is a debt needing repayment, then just keep quiet and let me treat you, alright?”

Mikado didn’t take a step backwards and equally glared at Kisa.

“Ara ara, why are you that against it? Your pride as a man? To think that your small pride would get crushed by being treated by a girl... You can’t even accept my kindness?”

“It’s not about pride... I’m just maintaining the minimum amount of wariness... I do know that in the Wall Street crash of 1929, which caused world-wide chaos, the Nanjou Family had their hands in it...”

“Just give in and let me treat you!”

“No, I will be the one to treat you!”

Both of them kept adding reasons why they wouldn’t back down, and nothing changed. Mikado had a 10.000 yen bill in hand, while Kisa was gripping a black card, glaring at Mikado. The employee could only watch over them as she started shaking.

“H-hey, you two! You can’t just pay at a shop like this with a 10.000 yen bill, nor that weird card!” Rinka couldn’t keep watching and stepped between them.

“What...?”

“Why!? You can use this card in any country of the world! Are you saying that this isn’t earth?!”

“Paying at a normal stall with a huge bill is just troublesome for the change, and they don’t even use credit cards here! I will be the one to pay, so just treat me another time.”

Rinka took out a white wallet, and finished the business with a 1.000 yen bill and some coins.

“I see... So for a small stall like this, I should prepare smaller bills so that they can give back the change easier...” Mikado learned something new today.

“Does this mean that I am indebted to the Shizukawa Family...? She has grabbed a weakness of mine... What will she ask for in return...?” Kisa was lost in thought, seriously wondering about something.

The employee made the crepes at high speed, pushed them into the hands of Mikado and the others and escaped into the back of the stall. After accepting them, the three went to take a seat on a bench. To Mikado’s left and right were Kisa and Rinka, and while observing the two of them, Mikado munched on his crepe. That being said, it wasn’t exactly an atmosphere to relax in. Finishing half of her crepe, Kisa spoke up.

“Kitamikado-san, your crepe sure looks delicious. I’ve never eaten any non-sweet crepes before, how does it taste?”

“How...? It’s pretty difficult to explain...” Mikado certainly wasn’t a gourmet or certified food tester.

“Then, can I take a bite? I’ll give you some of mine as well. Here.” Kisa said with a smile, as she pushed her blackberry custard towards Mikado.

“Eh...”

On the crepe, there were still spots where Kisa had nibbled at in a

cute manner. Seeing the hesitating Mikado, Kisa flashed a fiendish smile.

“Ara, what’s wrong? Kitamikado-san, are you flustered by chance? Doesn’t this mean that you are conscious of me? Or do you like me that much that you’re too nervous?”

“...That’s not it.”

That was exactly the case. Just thinking about his lips touching the same spot where Kisa’s had taken a bite, made blood rush to Mikado’s head.

“What is it then? Come on, accept it. You’re so embarrassed about sharing an indirect kiss with me. You’re like a grade school child, aren’t you?”

While teasing Mikado with a cute voice, she kept on pushing the crepe towards Mikado’s mouth. If he let the topic go, it’d end up as an indirect kiss. If that happened, Mikado didn’t have to blame himself, but he still felt that Kisa would have gained the upper hand in this battle. No, it certainly would end up like that. Thinking that things might end up badly, Mikado planned a turn-around.

“I’m perfectly fine right now, so you can have a bite of mine first.”

“Eh...?” Kisa raised her eyebrows. “I-I’m good, so you can go ahead and eat first.”

“Why? You wanted a taste, right? Don’t hold back.”

“B-But...I-I’m already full...”

“Just when did you get full? Isn’t that a bit inconsistent? Come on, take a bite.”

“Ah...Uu...”

As Mikado pushed his crepe towards Kisa, she froze up while watching the cut end. The color of her ears slowly changed.

“...Are you embarrassed?”

“I-I-I-I-I’m not embarrassed in the s-schlightest!” Kisa bit her tongue as she hurdled over her own words.

“Don’t lie. Just take a bite now. If you don’t want to, that means that you’re conscious of the other person right? You were the one who said that before, weren’t you?”

“W-Wait! Wait just a second! You’re wrong! This is different!”

As Mikado pushed his crepe further towards her, Kisa bent her body backwards on the bench, as if she was trying to escape. Her face was blushing red and her eyes were watery. She was panicking way too much. Enjoying Kisa going from calm and collected to full-on embarrassed like this, Mikado felt a bit sadistic and decided to tease her a bit more. Without thinking, he leaned forward to softly whisper into Kisa’s ear.

“Your face is red, Nanjou. Aren’t you a bit too easy? Being so so embarrassed because of one single, indirect kiss, isn’t that too much? Right, Nanjou?”

“S-Sto...p...Kitamikado-san...I-I’ll apologize...so please forgive me...” Kisa tried her best to push her arms up to protect herself as her body twitched every time Mikado spoke.

She looked like she was being molested, making Mikado even more excited for this.

“If it’s something that you brought up yourself, you have to properly follow through with it, you know? Even if I have to force you. Now, open wide.”

“Ah.....” Kisa’s eyes were fixated on the crepe closing in on her.

But, instead of trying to run away, her lovable lips were just slowly but steadily opening up. It happened the second her lips were about to touch his crepe.

“If you don’t want it, then I will gladly take a bite!” Rinka jumped in between them, teary-eyed.

Sinking her teeth into the crepe in Mikado’s hand, she took a bite,

chewing on it like a hamster. Although it looked like she really was forcing herself, she finally finished the bite and sighed.

“An indirect kiss with Mikado-sama is nothing for me! Our mental preparedness is different I see, Nanjou-san!”

“W-What do you mean by mental preparedness...?”

Rarely enough, Kisa was pushed back in the argument. Rinka put one finger on the lips that were part of the indirect kiss just now.

“I’m talking about being mentally prepared to be his future wife. Rather than just an indirect kiss, we will be having direct kisses after all.”

“W-What are you...?” Kisa winced.

“I’m just stating the obvious. Mikado-sama and I have this sort of relationship after all. Right, Mikado-sama?” Rinka whispered enthusiastically.

“Even if you say that...” Mikado himself was a bit flustered.

He thought that she was just a docile and quite frankly, boring woman, but she could be quite bold if she wanted to.

“I-I’m a bit surprised. To think that Kitamikado-san’s fiancé would be a girl like this!” Kisa pointed at Rinka.

“I am just preparing myself to eventually marry Mikado-sama. We will be having our engagement ceremony soon, so when that time comes, Mikado-sama and I will be proper fiancées!”

A confused voice leaked out of Kisa’s mouth.

“Eh...engagement ceremony...? W-When will that be...?”

“In two weeks! Basically, in two weeks, breeding between me and Mikado-sama will start!”

“You’re being way too vivid!”

Even Mikado felt bad for Kisa. This certainly wasn't the type of vocabulary you would hear from a female student, attending a prim and proper girls only academy and it didn't suit Rinka either. She was probably just losing herself in the heat of the moment.

Kisa muttered to herself absent mindedly.

"Two weeks... In two weeks, Kitamikado-san will graduate from his virginity... He will stop being a virgin..."

"Hey, stop it already!"

It's true that he was a virgin, but it still hurt being referred to as one. A girl close to them, sitting on a bench, tilted her head.

"Hey, Papa. What is a virgin?"

"E-Eh, that's..." The father didn't know how to respond.

"Hey hey, tell me! Papa! What does it mean?"

"I'll tell you, so calm down! Being a virgin is... something very embarrassing..."

"Is Papa a virgin?"

"No, Papa isn't a virgin!"

"Yay! Mai's Papa isn't a virgin!"

"Yes, it's all thanks to Mama..."

"Amazing! So because of Mama, Papa doesn't have to be embarrassed!" The girl was hopping up and down on her father's lap.

"Being a virgin is something very embarrassing..." Mikado fell down into the abyss of depression.

"It's fine! You have me, Mikado-sama!"

"Y-Yeah..."

Rinka suddenly acted so reliable.

“I-I’m...going home now...”

Kisa on the other hand was the exact opposite, waddling away on unsteady feet. She bumped into a nearby tree, letting out a shriek and almost tumbling over her own feet.

“You seem to be really tired, you okay? Should I call a car...?”

“I’m fine...I have to watch the evening episode of Isono-san<sup>6</sup>, so I’m just leaving early...” Kisa smiled, but her eyes were dead.

—Is she that shocked about this...? No, that can’t be... Is she thinking that once the engagement ceremony is done, it’ll be harder to win in the game...?

Mikado got up from the bench and gazed at Kisa’s back. In response, Rinka muttered faintly.

“So the person Mikado-sama likes is Nanjou-san I see...”

“N-No way...” Mikado gulped.

Rinka let out a saddened sigh.

“Even a kid would be able to tell. Your gaze, your voice, your attitude, everything is overflowing with affection for Nanjou-san. And I think that she...”

“...What?” Mikado asked, as Rinka suddenly stopped.

But, she immediately shook her head.

“No, it’s nothing.”

“Is that so...?”

Mikado felt like he was about to hear something very crucial, but it wouldn’t feel right to just question her. With a girl like Rinka, she’d probably keep quiet now that she had decided against talking. That very Rinka got up and gazed directly at Mikado.



“Mikado-sama...you’re going to be engaged with me, right?”

“...What’s with you so suddenly?”

Her expression was serious, not giving off any atmosphere of joking around.

“No matter how much you love Nanjou-san, that fact will not change. Neither the Kitamikado Family, nor the Shizukawa Family will pull back now... No, I will not step down from this.” Rinka’s gaze showed determination.

“Are you really fine with this? It’s been the Kitamikado Family’s thing to get fiances for their spouses, but the Shizukawa Family is different, right... Shouldn’t you be against this?”

“...You’re wrong.”

“Eh?”

“You’re wrong about this! This is something that I...!” Her long black hair danced through the quick motion of her head shaking.

Her slender body jumped into Mikado’s arms, pressing her head against his chest, she tightly embraced him.

“...This marriage talk is what I have wished for. Although my father might be the one who brought it up, I have chosen this. I was not forced into this.”

“Out of your own will...?” Mikado’s eyes opened wide.

The Kitamikado Family didn’t offer that much freedom. He couldn’t choose the person he loved. That’s why he expected it to be the same for Rinka, unable to freely choose.

“I can imagine your feelings, Mikado-sama. That’s why I won’t force you to forget about Nanjou-san immediately. However... I will definitely...I promise I will definitely make you forget. I don’t mind how you want to use me for that end...Mikado-sama...” Rinka brought her lips close to Mikado and whispered.

Mikado could perfectly see himself reflected in her eyes. Her white, slender neck and her sweet scent that wafted up from there attacked Mikado's brain through his nostrils.

—Is there anybody else out there...that would feel this way towards me...?

Mikado was completely overwhelmed at the heaviness of Rinka's feelings. If he were to marry the person that his parents chose, he would become truly happy. No, no matter what was necessary, Rinka would use everything at her disposal to ensure that Mikado would find happiness while being with her. And even now, Rinka showed no signs of separating from Mikado.

“Haaaa...”

Inside the Nanjou Family's wide bath house, a sigh escaped Kisa's lips. She was currently resting in the bathwater, surrounded by a jet-black marmor. As she soaked herself in that water, it felt like she was about to be wrapped up by space if she went any deeper. In this luxurious bath, which only allowed entry to direct daughters of the Nanjou Family and the unmarried women of those, the bath water traversed long distances until it would finally flow in here. In this sacred place, the person holding a goddess like body that every girl on earth would be jealous of, Kisa, was comfortably stretching, but her heart was heavy.

—Kitamikado-san didn't look like he hated it at all...

She saw it. That time. She might have been dashing away from Mikado and Rinka, but her curiosity got the better of her and she checked in on them from the shadows. Yes, she saw the moment when Rinka was embracing Mikado. It was plain as day that Rinka was trying to seduce Mikado, and the boy didn't show any signs of trying to push her away. There is nothing standing between them. Even their parents are supporting them, or rather, are encouraging them.

“My chances of winning...are despairing...”

As Kisa let out another sigh, Mizuki joined her in the bath.

“What’s wrong, Onee-chan? Sighing like that.” She took a closer look at Kisa’s face as she tilted her head in confusion.

“...Nothing at all. I am just a bit tired.”

Kisa didn’t have the energy nor the willpower to properly explain the situation to her little sister. She hated to show anything related to weakness anyway. Even if the other person was her little sister, the successor of the Nanjou Family shouldn’t give off any sense of powerlessness.

“Hmmm, is that so? I thought that you might have tried to hinder the date between Mikado-kun and Rinka-chan, but the enemy was unexpectedly strong, so you had to run away in shambles or something like that!”

“Why do you know all of that?!” Kisa jumped up from the bath in shock.

Mizuki laughed innocently in response.

“I don’t~ I really just guessed!”

“I don’t believe that at all! You were tailing us, right?! It must be that, right?!”

“Oh come on~ I didn’t tail you. I was just going out together with Onee-chan and kept it a secret from you~”

“That’s what you call tailing! Do you have too much time on your hands or something?!”

“Yeah, lots. I sent Mikado-kun a message asking if we could do something today, but he declined.”

“When did you exchange IDs?!”

—Even though Kitamikado-san and I haven’t...

Kisa wanted Mikado’s contact information so badly that an arm was about to reach out from her throat, but she was constantly too embarrassed to ask. Finding it out through other means was easy,

yes, but there was no meaning in that.

“But, thanks to that, the four of us could play lots today.”

“The only one who thinks like that is Mizuki...”

“If I think so, then it’s fine.”

Kisa wasn’t sure if she should treat her little sister as just an idiot or an enthusiast that was taking it a tick to far. Mizuki sat down at the washing area of the bath, moving her towel over her body.

“Still, this is pretty weird. For Onee-chan to admit to losing against another person.”

“W-Well...Shizukawa-san is really beautiful and so feminine...”

“Her breasts are bigger than Onee-chan’s as well!”

“Don’t remind me!” Kisa moved to hide her own chest. “And even more so, she’s good at being helpful and all that... I feel like every man would fall in love with her.”

“And unlike Onee-chan, she’s also pretty bold, right?”

“Uuuu...”

Being told this straightforwardly, Kisa sank deeper into the water. Mizuki laughed as if she found this funny.

“Even though you see yourself as the queen all the time, you’re actually pretty weak and sloppy, right? Also, that’s exactly why you’re scared you can’t stand at the top, right?”

“B-B-Be quiet! Don’t just calmly analyze me!”

The scary part was that Mizuki was mostly on point.

“Also, I can’t become bold and aggressive! In our game’s rules, it says that ‘Openly showing affection results in defeat’, you know! No matter how much I want to, I can’t!”

No matter how openly Rinka presented her feelings to Mikado, there

was no problem whatsoever, no repercussions. She wasn't weighed down by this rule, able to attack Mikado at all times.

Mizuki put one finger on her lips, tilting her head in puzzlement.

"Are you really the type that would confess head on, even if that rule didn't exist?"

"Ugh..."

That was exactly the case. Kisa hugged her knees as she whispered.

"This competition... is getting worse by the second. In two weeks, Kitamikado-san and Shizukawa-san will properly be engaged and it looks like they'll be doing this and that, so once that happens, it'll be my loss..."

"Onee-chan, you idiooooooooooooooot!"

Mizuki raised her hand and swung it down at high speed towards the cheek of the sobbing Kisa. But, before that connected, she quickly swung her hand around and hit herself right on the face. A long, slapping and painful noise rang out in the bath house.

"E-Eh? Ehhh?!"

Kisa was more bewildered than if she was the one who got hit. As Mizuki's right cheek was turning beet red, she snapped at Kisa.

"Onee-chan! What is this?! Pull yourself together! Listen! No matter how strong your opponent might seem—"

"You're just continuing your lecture?! What?! Eh?! What was that just now!? Why did you hit yourself!?"

"This is Onee-chan's share!"

"No I get that, but why didn't you hit me?!"

"I feel like I'll get killed from the counterattack if I actually hit you!"

"A-Ah, I see...That's a good point..." Kisa muttered, as her heart beat

like crazy.

Mizuki pointed at Kisa, as she declared.

“This isn’t like you! Onee-chan, were you always this weak?! You weren’t, right!? Rather, if the country became a bother for your plans, you were ready to destroy it at all times...You’re that kind of fiendish devil, aren’t you?!”

“Mizuki...are you really scared of me? You aren’t, right?”

But Mizuki just kept going.

“Are you fine with having Mikado-kun stolen by Rinka-chan? Are you fine with watching them, living a happy life, getting lots of cute kids and rubbing that in your face...? You aren’t, right?!”

“O-Of course not...”

Just by thinking about it, Kisa grew agitated.

“Then, what is it that you need to do? Isn’t it the Nanjou way to get whatever you want, no matter what method you have to use? This is how YOU always do it, isn’t it?! Aren’t you frustrated losing against a beautiful lady, with no demerits?! Having her do all the perverted things with Mikado-kun, do you really endorse that?!”

“Of course I’m... frustrated...!” Kisa’s clenched fist was shaking in anger.

Even if she felt herself losing the battle, those feelings wouldn’t disappear so quickly. This wish of hers to get Mikado into her own two hands was not something that would be stopped by a mere wall or two. Kisa grit her teeth as she spoke up.

“From the very beginning, my fight was riddled with obstacles standing in my way... So all I have to do is remove everyone and everything that obstructs me...”

“Yeah yeah! That’s my Onee-chan!” Mizuki smiled gleefully.

The damage during their date on Kisa was too great, making her

almost lose herself, but thanks to this, she finally got back on her own two feet. All you need is a kind little sister.

“...Thank you, Mizuki. I have to stop this engagement at all costs and get Kitamikado-san into my own hands.”

“You can do it, Onee-chan! I’m cheering for you!” Mizuki raised one arm in the air.

Seeing that, Kisa felt the sudden urge to pat her cute little sister on the head.

“But... Is this really fine? Haven’t you also taken a liking to Kitamikado-san?”

“It’s totally fine! When Mikado-kun becomes my Onii-chan in law, we can do perverted stuff whenever we want!” Mizuki gave a suspiciously sly smile.

She might seem like an idiot most of the time, but she still is a full-fledged member of the Nanjou Family. She would do whatever it took to get what she wanted.

“I won’t share Kitamikado-san with you, okay?!”

Kisa gave Mizuki a sharp warning, but she just blocked her ears with her arms as she continued to grin.

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1 7-stringed Chinese zither

2 Rinka is speaking very politely, which is pretty hard to convey in English. At the same time, so does Mikado while talking to her.

3 Mimi (耳) = Ear

4 Taisho period: 1912-1926, naginata = a weapon similar to a glaive

5 Originally worn by men, but nowadays made for both sexes.

6 Really not sure on this one, but I’d imagine it’s a reference to the very old TV show Sazae-san, where the protagonist is called Sazae

Isono





# Chapter 4: Suspension Bridge Effect

As Mikado was about to make his way home after classes had ended, he caught wind of some commotion at the student entrance. There, students had gathered, exchanging words as they gazed in one direction all together.

“Hey, those clothes...”

“Not from our school, right...?”

“You know, that girls school...”

“She’s a beauty though man.”

“Is she waiting for someone?”

“Should we call out to her?”

The person standing there, having to endure all this muttering that would certainly reach her ears, was without a doubt Shizukawa Rinka. Unlike their last meeting where she had worn a kimono, her body was now dressed in a dark blue uniform with a white scarf paired with black tights. It might not be a fashionable uniform, but it fit the prim and proper Rinka very much and it actually gave off a certain erotic feeling. Even in the midst of the students from the prestigious Sousei Academy, Rinka’s looks stood out. All the attention clearly troubled her, but her mimicry and gesturing corresponding to that only upped the charm she was emitting.

Mikado worked his way through this mass of people and as soon as Rinka spotted him, her face brightened up.

“Mikado-sama! I have been waiting for you!”

Her eyes were sparkling and she was walking towards Mikado with her bag in hand, her black shoes were dancing over the ground.

“What’s wrong, Rinka? Do you have some business at our school?”

As Mikado asked out of surprise, Rinka cutely puffed out her cheeks.

“That’s not it. I wanted to see Mikado-sama’s face. Is it wrong to come and greet my future husband?”

“No...It’s not like that but...”

To be honest, Mikado’s heart skipped a beat at that. On top of that, he felt the envious gazes of the people around them directly on his skin. There is no way that any boy would hate being shown affection directly by a girl like Rinka. Rinka put one hand on her chest.

“I’m glad to hear that. I was thinking that you might get angry at me.”

“I won’t get angry because of that. If you informed me earlier, I would have hurried up.”

“Then you might have run away instead.”

“No...I wouldn’t run away...”

Or so he answered, but he didn’t have any confidence in that. He was truly happy about how Rinka felt about him, but he himself had a person he had feelings for.

“I’m joking. I wanted to surprise you, Mikado-sama.” Rinka smiled calmly.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry! Let me through please! Don’t block me!”

Then, Kokage came running, trying to push herself through the spectators. A sparkle of light had started to burn up in her eyes, as she pointed her camera at Rinka.

“Hello there! I just heard something very interesting right now, specifically ‘Future Husband’, so could you maybe clarify that?! Are the two of you going out?!”

“Ahh...It’s the stalker again...” Rinka’s eyes looked at her in

contempt.

In response, Kokage quickly tried to correct her.

“I-I’m not a stalker! My name is Kawaraya Kokage. I’m a member of the newspaper club of Sousei Academy, and Mikado-kun’s classmate!”

“Mikado-sama is being stalked by a classmate?!”

“That’s not it! Right, Mikado-sama?!”

“I wonder...I can’t tell for sure...”

“I thought so!”

“Mikado-kuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuun?!”

Rinka hid behind Mikado’s back, heightening her guard against Kokage, who panicked. Although Mikado felt a bit bad for Kokage in this context, her actions recently were moving more and more into stalker territory, so he couldn’t completely deny Rinka’s doubts. And with that timing, Kisa walked out of the entrance. Spotting Rinka, she let out an indignant snort.

“Ara...If it isn’t Shizukawa-san. To run after him this much, my my.”

“...I won’t lose against Nanjou-san. I have to watch over Mikado-sama, so that he doesn’t get stolen.”

“No need to worry about that, I won’t steal him. Rather, you are the thieving cat, aren’t you?”

“N-No! I always...always think about Mikado-sama...!”

Sparks flew between them yet again. The spectators around them started to get noisy. Kokage was about to join in and take pictures of the scenery, when Mikado quickly put adhesive on the lens of her camera.

“Kyaaaaa?! The new lens I just got from dad—!”

Kokage dashed outside, half in tears. She's probably trying to get the tools required to melt the hardened adhesive. What she had just witnessed was one of the Kitamikado Family's secret techniques, 'Report Regulation (Physics-style)'.

Grabbing Mikado's arm, Rinka threw a glare at Kisa.

"It does not matter, since everything will come to an end very soon! Once we finish our engagement, I will not let anybody try to get Mikado-sama into their hands! I ask of you that you don't do anything unnecessary until then!"

"Fufu...I won't do anything unnecessary...Yes..." Kisa flashed a dubious smile.

"What are you implying with that smile?! You certainly are planning something, aren't you?!"

Rinka grew even more wary of Kisa. Although she might look calm and proper, as soon as it came to Kisa, she was like a cat.

"No, I am not. I am just trying to make everyone in this world happy, leaving me aside...that's all, really."

"I can see that you are lying! That's the face of a person that is ready to sacrifice everyone and everything else just to become happy!"

"Oh please. I am always thinking about the happiness of the people around me, right, Kitamikado-san?"

"Not really, no."

Mikado completely denied that. He saw no reason to take her side for this very subject. That being said, this selfishness of hers, only thinking about her own happiness, is also what made Mikado fall in love with Kisa. But, if he were to develop feelings for a diligent girl like Rinka, he was sure that his future life would be filled with nothing but happiness.

"You sure are cruel, Kitamikado-san. I really think you have the wrong idea about me." Kisa shook her head, feeling dejected.

“...No, I feel like I actually know you pretty well...”

“So I can take this as a confession then?!”

“No?!”

“You just announced that you are the person that understands me the most, right?! So this means that you love me!”

“I don’t!”

He does. Her sickening parts, her selfish parts, her incompetent parts and more than anything her maiden-like parts, Mikado had accepted everything about her.

“U-Um...Mikado-sama...? Shouldn’t we go home now? I have a car waiting, and a reservation for a restaurant of the Shizukawa Group...” Rinka pulled on Mikado’s arm in worry.

“Y-Yeah...” Mikado nodded.

Although he really wasn’t the biggest fan of it, he couldn’t turn down an invitation from his fiancée. It seemed as if Rinka was nice enough to keep quiet about the relationship between Mikado and Kisa, but he couldn’t relax forever.

“Now then, Nanjou-san, if you would excuse us.”

Rinka quickly tried to leave that place, tightly holding onto Mikado’s arm, not giving him any chance to escape. As Mikado’s back was turned to Kisa, he felt like he heard the gritting of teeth. But, when he looked over his shoulder, all that was there was Kisa’s usual calm smile.

“See you then...Kitamikado-san. But don’t worry, I will be the one to win this game.”

Hearing those words, Mikado was once again reminded that, just because he had a fiancée or just because he would be engaged, it didn’t mean that Kisa would give up.

—What are you planning...?

Mikado formed a fist, mentally preparing himself.

The bed is shaking. To the left, to the right, up and down, everywhere. It was shaking with incredible momentum, in every possible direction. And it wasn't just that, the wind was extremely strong too. Even though he should be resting in his own secure room, which granted the best possible environment for its successor, Mikado's body was cooling down immensely. No, there was something more important that was violently assaulting Mikado, which only heightened his feeling that something was off.

—Did I even go back to my own room...?

He frantically made his brain cells remember what happened last. He stopped at a bookstore on his way home last night, and then...

—And then...?

Realizing that he was missing the crucial memories after that, he forced his eyelids open. What greeted him was the wide open sky. Beneath this blue sky, above a deep valley, Mikado was on top of a suspension bridge. His sleepiness was gone in one second, he became wide awake. Sadly, this suspension bridge wasn't one made out of metal for touristic purposes. It was rope that held it all together, wrapped around two wooden planks on each side. Not to mention that said planks didn't really look too reliable, as they showed great signs of aging.

“What is going on heeere?!”

At the same time a gust of wind reached him from below, Mikado let out a scream of despair. If he fell down here, he would die. His innards would get crushed, and he would die. Imagining the final sight of his remains, Mikado tightly grasped the suspension bridge's rope with both his hands.

“Good morning, Kitamikado-san. An energetic morning, isn't it?”

Standing relatively close to Mikado was Kisa, smiling down at him. To be fair, Mikado had already anticipated that he would be greeted by her.

“What is this about?! Is this a dream?!”

“You will be able to see that for yourself if you jump off the bridge here. If it hurts, it wasn’t a dream, that’s all there is to it, right?”

“I probably won’t be able to feel pain even if it isn’t a dream! And once it’s not a dream, it’s all over!”

“You sure like to complain a lot, Kitamikado-san. Also, there’s a chance that it’s not all over even if it wasn’t a dream.”

“I’m saying that the chance of me dying if it isn’t a dream is 99.9999999%!”

“You can never throw away hope...No matter the situation!”

“Shut up!”

Kisa formed a fist with her hand to show her motivation, but that only aggravated Mikado even more.

“Is this your doing?! What are you planning with this?!”

Kisa was always acting ridiculously crazy with certain measures, but this time it was ten times worse. The only thing to do was to directly ask her. In response, Kisa put her index finger on her mouth, and calmly announced.

“Do you know...the suspension bridge effect?”

“.....Huh?” Mikado was dumbfounded.

“With a thrilling situation such as being on a suspension bridge, the heart beat moved by fear and tension can turn into one of love and admiration. Basically, this is the most effective situation to make Kitamikado-san fall for me...You have the defensive power of a newborn deer.....!”

Kisa announced proudly as she shook furiously. Her face was pale, as she clung to the suspension bridge herself.

“...It looks like you’re shaking like a newborn deer, Nanjou. Aren’t



you a bit too scared for someone who set this up themselves?”

“I-I-I’m not shaking at all! For this whole hour until you woke up, I’ve never felt any fear at all, let me tell you that!”

“...You really worked hard.”

“What is that gaze of admiration about?! I really am not scared!”

Kisa was about to cry. With her grades being on top of the student year, yet still being that much of an idiot, Mikado couldn’t help but want to tightly embrace her. With all the energy left in her body, Kisa lifted her chin.

“This is the only time that you can act so relaxed, Kitamikado-san! Look over there!”

“Over there...?”

Where the girl was pointing at, the end of the suspension bridge... were the planks of wood with rope from the bridge wrapped around it. However, that seemed to grow looser and looser by the second.

“H-How about this!? In order to heighten the impact of this suspension bridge effect, I set it up so that this bridge will collapse in about one hour! I was a bit worried if you would actually wake up during that hour but...Seems like you made it in time!”

“This isn’t the time to be saying that!!!”

Mikado grabbed Kisa by the wrist, and started dashing. At the opposite direction of where the bridge was about to collapse, he just ran without thinking.

“Aren’t you a bit too pushy?! Where are you taking me?!”

“To the other end of the bridge of course!”

At the very end, he kicked off the plank and they jumped onto safe ground. Shortly after, the bridge collapsed behind them. As the two of them safely landed, their shoulders heaved up and down as they breathed heavily. Whilst Kisa’s body was still twitching, she asked.

“So, how was the suspension bridge effect? Has your loving heart for me finally awakened?”

“I was fearing for my life, how could I pay attention to that!?”

“W-Weird...I read in a treatise that this method would definitely work...”

“Treatise?! What kind of treatise was that?!”

Mikado’s heart was beating so intensely it was about to leap out of his chest. This might have been the first time he ever felt angst for his life to this extent.

“Also, while we’re at it, this isn’t the suspension bridge effect! This really was a suspension bridge!”

“And what’s the problem with that if it’s similar?”

“It’s not just similar, it’s the exact same thing! Don’t reenact it with the real thing!”

Mikado looked up and gazed at his surroundings. Sadly, he had never seen that scenery. Past the reddish-brown canyon, there was a wide wilderness. Grass that looked like ivy tangled around it, with cacti dotted about from time to time. In the vast distance, he spotted mountains reaching up towards the sky. The sky was high up, richly colored. There was even a long fox-like creature, looking at them briefly before dashing away.

“...What country is this?!” Mikado was yet again dumbfounded.

To that, Kisa snickered.

“We’re still in Japan of course. A place around one hour away from our school. As if I could get you out of the country before you woke up, even I’m not that astounding.”

“It was enough to get me on top of a suspension bridge before I woke up, so that’s pretty astounding in my books!”

“Well, I said one hour, but I was moving you with my private jet.

This is a deserted island off the shore of Japan, owned by the Nanjou Family. So legally, we're still in Japan."

"A deserted island...you say...?"

Mikado developed a bad premonition. He had a feeling that he was pretty close to guessing what Kisa was planning. While staggering ever so slightly, Kisa stood up. Putting one hand on her hip, she went to point at Mikado with her index finger.

"Yes, my plan is far from over...The suspension bridge effect project is going to start now! While on a quest for survival, the suspension bridge effect will make you fall for me, so you better be prepared —!!!"

"....."

Mikado calmly and wordlessly grabbed Kisa's cheeks as she was in the middle of announcing that.

"Fueh?! W-What are you doing, Kitamikado-san?! T-This is a clear violation of our rules! You have to properly fight for this!" Kisa was flustered as she ranted on.

The feeling of her soothing, soft cheeks was calming.

"Just hurry up and call a plane that can take us out of here. I have my engagement ceremony in four days, so I have to be home by then. No, things will be bad as soon as they realize that I'm missing."

There must already be a great rukus happening in the Kitamikado Family. If they were to find out that the successor of the Nanjou Family had abducted Mikado, they might as well declare an all-out war. If that were to happen, Mikado could say goodbye to his dream of winning against Kisa in this love game and integrating her into the Kitamikado Family.

"B-But, I can't! The plane already flew home again and I don't have any reception to contact them again!"

"...What?"

Mikado let go of Kisa's cheeks and put one hand in his pocket. His smartphone was still properly stuffed in there. He went to check the time, which was around 10 am in the morning, but just like Kisa, he had no reception. In response, Kisa puffed out her chest.

"S-See, it's just as I said! Go and praise my honesty!"

"As if! What should we do about this?! How do we even get home?!"

"It's fine! In one week, a plane is scheduled to come and pick us up!"

"We'd probably be dead by then! Also, I won't make it to my engagement ceremony!" Mikado panicked.

It's not like he himself was eagerly waiting for the engagement ceremony to arrive, but it was necessary to not make the Kitamikado Family become suspicious of him.

"Is there no other method? I have to contact the people on the mainland at all costs."

"...Even if there was, I wouldn't tell you." Kisa averted her gaze.

Judging from that reaction, there was something.

"Please...Just this once, I can't take this as a joke." Mikado lowered his head towards Kisa.

"Uuuu..." She was wavering.

Letting out a sigh, Kisa seemingly gave in to Mikado's request, and put one hand in her pocket.

"If things went south too drastically, I had prepared the equipment to send out a rescue signal...."

And then, she stopped her words.

"Huh...? Eh...? Why...?"

"Don't tell me...You're not saying that you lost it, right?"

"O-Of course not...As if I would do something as clumsy as that..."

Panic filled Kisa's expression. Having pulled out all her pockets, she still hadn't found what she was looking for.

"Don't tell me...you dropped it on the suspension bridge?"

That would mean that the switch is now at the bottom of the valley down there. Once that realization set in, Kisa went pale in a matter of seconds.

"W-What should we do?! Kitamikado-san, what do we do?!"

"How would I know!? Don't just start panicking now!"

"N-Now that you say it! In the western area of the island, there's a private residence we rarely use, so there should be a stable phone connection! Though I don't know if we can get there in four days..."

"That's it!"

Mikado looked up at the sky, checking the position of the sun to find out which direction west was. Since it would be a long trip, he tightened his shoelaces and reached out with his hand towards Kisa.

"Eh...W-What...?" Kisa was bewildered.

"You come with me. I can't leave a girl like you alone out here."

"You're not...mad? Even though I messed up your schedule...?"

"It's for the sake of the game, so how could I blame you for that? Rather, thanks for inviting me over to your private island." Mikado smiled.

Mikado was already used to Kisa taking ridiculous measures. That's exactly the reason why Mikado was attracted to her in the first place. Although she was a difficult person to deal with, it would never get boring with her around. If he managed to get Kisa into the Kitamikado Family, his life would be pure bliss, Mikado thought to himself.

"It's not an invite or anything..."

“If there wasn’t the engagement ceremony going on in the background, I would have thoroughly enjoyed coming to this island, I’m sure...But for now, let’s hurry home.”

“Kitamikado...san...” Kisa’s eyes grew watery. “Yes...I don’t want to go home...but let’s go...”

Her slender hand was definitely reaching out towards Mikado. And, he lightly grabbed it. Just because of that, his heartbeat accelerated. As Kisa returned his grip, feeling the softness of her skin and even the difference in their stature, Mikado felt blood rushing to his head.

“L-Let’s go...”

“Y-Yes...”

Exchanging flustered words of affirmation, they started walking, unable to look each other in the eye.

This deserted island was incredibly wide and no matter where they walked, the sandy beach never left their sight. Luckily, the temperature wasn’t too extreme and the evaporation of water didn’t bother the two of them too much, but after walking for a while, anyone would grow thirsty- On top of that, Kisa seemed like she was nearing her physical limits.

“I’m sorry...Let me rest for a bit.”

With those words, the girl sat down beneath the shadow of a large tree at 5pm. Having checked the time, Mikado cut the power of his phone and stuffed it into his pocket. Since he had no way of charging it here, he had to preserve power as much as he could.

“You okay? You seem really worn out.” Mikado sat down next to Kisa.

“I’m fine. I’m just not used to this much walking. Otherwise I’d have the leg muscles of a gorilla.”

“...I’d rather not see that.”

He wanted her to stay just as she was right now.

“...Maybe you really would have been better off leaving me alone. I’ll just slow you down and I’m the reason we ended up in this situation in the first place.”

“No need for that self-loathing now. If you’re feeling bad, then just don’t do stuff like this in the first place.” Mikado laughed faintly.

“But...I couldn’t find any other methods...”

Kisa looked at her palm and formed a fist, different from usual, one more feeble and modest. That expression of hers, overflowing with emotions, only called forth the desire to protect her even more. Mikado was about to hug her in order to support her, but he quickly stopped himself.

—Don’t tell me, is this the suspension bridge effect?! Her plan is actually working?!

All the while this happened, Kisa showed no signs of going on the attack any more. She just had her back to the big tree, hugging her knees as she dwelled in depression. Apparently, she really was exhausted.

“...You want to take a quick nap?”

“I-I keep telling you that I’m fine! If you just give me ten minutes, I’ll be back to normal...”

A cute rumbling sound coming from Kisa. And then, silence. All that passed now was time. Kisa’s face was slowly but steadily colored in a scarlet tone and Mikado carefully asked.

“...You’re so hungry that you can’t walk anymore?”

“I am a living being that will never get hungry!” Kisa snapped at him.

“No you clearly are...What are you saying with a face as red as that?”

“It’s not red at all! Well, it might be, but that’s just my blood, nothing more!”

“You should see a doctor for that! Also, there’s no need to be embarrassed just because your stomach was screaming for food...”

“I-I’m not embarrassed...in the slightest!”

She was crazy embarrassed. Tightly hugging her knees to herself, she was shaking.

—I really don’t get girls...Well, I guess it’s better if I don’t pursue the topic any further...

Mikado thought to himself.

“Then...Well, I’ll go look for something to eat. You just wait here.”

“You’re only saying that to leave me behind, right?!”

As Mikado was about to walk away, Kisa jumped at him.

“I won’t do that.”

“Of course you will! My stomach was rumbling after all! My girl power was just reduced to zero because of that!”

“That won’t happen just because of something minor like that...”

“Naturally! The moment I made you realize that I had an organ inside my stomach, I already lost! You must think of me as weird now!”

“It’d be very scary if you didn’t have any organs inside you! Also, I’m not paying it too much mind!”

“Lies! You’re trying to run away from my organs, aren’t you?!”

Kisa was clearly panicking over a grain of rice. That being said, she must really be worried that she would be left alone.

“Trust me, it’s fine. I’ll be back in a bit.” Mikado strongly announced.

“T-Then, give me some sort of proof that you will definitely come back. Ummm...Something important to Kitamikado-san...I wouldn’t



mind your clothes.”

“I do mind. Even if this is a deserted island, I’d rather not run around butt naked.”

“Wouldn’t it be great to feel how it was for the hunters and gatherers during the stone age?”

“No, it wouldn’t. I’d rather treasure how far civilization has come.”

Kisa tilted her head in confusion.

“Civilization and invention is something that was brought forth by humans, but is it really that meritorious...? Sometimes, we have to free ourselves from the shackles of civilization, don’t we...?”

“Stop with that deep nonsense. Here, I’ll give you my phone instead.”

Mikado stuffed his smartphone into Kisa’s pocket and stepped out of the shadow of the big tree. Turning around, Kisa was still worried, as she tightly pressed Mikado’s phone against herself. Although he wished that the circumstances were a bit different, he was glad that he could be of help to Kisa.

—Living on a deserted island...might not be so bad.

He couldn’t help but feel that way. But, realizing that this was going exactly as Kisa was hoping, he quickly shook his head to get his thoughts back on track.

As Mikado returned from his food gathering trip, he was greeted by a rather nervous-looking Kisa. She was constantly standing up and sitting down in the shade of the same tree, looking around at her surroundings. Holding the smartphone dearly to her chest, she took a few steps back and forth. Apparently, she still hadn’t realized that Mikado had returned. Since the resource gathering took too long, she now looked like a little kid, separated from her parents in the shopping mall. Though this might be an expected reaction from a normal high school girl, this is the arrogant Nanjou Kisa we’re talking about, so her behaviour was far from what you would expect. Because of this, Mikado couldn’t help but gaze at her from a distance.

However, Kisa quickly realized Mikado's presence, and her eyes lit up. But that didn't last long as she changed her expression to her usual cool and arrogant one again.

"I-I didn't expect you to come back. You sure have strange tastes."

"Sorry that it look so long...You must have been worried."

"T-T-There's no way I would be worried?! This island still belongs to the Nanjou Family! You could say that it's one part of my family! I feel at home here!" As Kisa was emphasizing that, she was about to break into tears.

"Again, I'm really sorry. So don't cry."

"I'm not crying! It just looks like I am because rain got into my eye!"

"But the sky is clear?"

"But...But but but!"

Giving the stomping Kisa a bitter smile, Mikado started making some food with the ingredients he gathered. She probably didn't want her crying face to be seen, as she averted her gaze and just quietly sat down next to him. Around ten minutes later, Mikado lined up a great quantity of food in front of her. Boiled wild grass, mushroom saute, a salad with citrus fruits and plants and steak from a wild animal.

"Umm...why does this feel so extravagant...?"

Kisa didn't try to cover up the rumbling of her stomach as she asked in confusion.

"I just prepared a lot because you said you were hungry. I have some water from a nearby spring."

Having built a large container out of some leaves, he handed that over to Kisa.

"Are you really Kitamikado-san...?"

"I don't get the question."

“You’re not some passing nomad, right? You’re a proper citizen of Japan, right?”

“Yeah, and I should be in the same year as you?”

“Then, why are your survival skills this high? Are you some ex-soldier?”

Kisa was clearly doubting the scenery in front of her eyes. Mikado giggled faintly.

“I’m not an ex-soldier, no, but in the Kitamikado Family, I received training for every possible situation. I would be prepared to survive the destruction of our hometown and build up a new civilization.”

Taking a swiss army knife out of his wallet and a small lighter, he showed it to Kisa.

“Just how tough are you being educated just to become a politician...? Leave that stuff to the soldiers beneath you.”

“There’s never a guarantee that the military is on your side. Maybe a coup d’état occurs and they’re suddenly my enemy, so I have to be prepared.”

“O-Ohh...”

Half of Kisa’s reaction was bewilderment, half was admiration.

“Just go ahead and eat up. And no, there’s no poison in there.”

“I didn’t try to poison you yet, so don’t make it sound like I did!”

“Yet...?”

Saying something that Mikado couldn’t ignore, Kisa put some of the mushroom saute into her mouth. Carefully starting to chew, her face lit up.

“Delicious! Really delicious! Even though they shouldn’t have any taste, they’re still so rich in flavour!”

“That’s the flavour of all the ingredients. With real ingredients, you don’t need any added spice.” Mikado explained like the protagonist of some cooking drama.

“So basically...it’s my duty now to remove any spice from this world?”

“No need to go that far.”

“Still, this is really delicious! And this meat! I don’t even know what meat this is, but it’s still delicious!” Kisa happily chewed on the meal in front of her.

Feeling happy just from watching the girl getting more cheerful, he decided not to tell her how the meat looked before being cooked. He just wanted her to enjoy the taste for now.

“That reminds me...This might be my first dinner together with Kitamikado-san...”

“You count this as a dinner...?”

“A dinner is still a dinner. Not to mention that the chef was Kitamikado-san himself, and on a deserted island...This will surely turn into some good memories.”

“If we manage to make it safely out of here.” Mikado commented.

“Thank you, Kitamikado-san. This has been the best dinner ever.”

“No...it’s not that big of a deal...”

“No no, you really are a great chef. If it’s with you, I wouldn’t mind where I lived wherever it may be.”

“Ugh...!”

Mikado’s heart received 500 billion damage. Those were words that sounded like a proposal, although they also weren’t, just barely being within the rules of their game. Even so, Mikado’s reason and defense took a great hit, making him stagger for a second. This was really bad, he thought. If this keeps on, he might actually die. That’s why

he wanted to go on the counteroffensive. Basically, showing his real feelings, while still not crossing the line that would make him lose the game.

“I’m happy that you’re enjoying it so much. Being able to see your cute smile, I’m already full.”

He realized too late just what kind of embarrassing and bold things he was saying. It was not a lie in the slightest, but way too humiliating to say out loud. He was about to die because of a different reason. The fever might actually kill him off before this island would. He was totally expecting a condescending laugh from Kisa, but that never came, and as he looked over...

“Cu...C-C-Cu...Cu...!”

Kisa was mumbling weird sounds to herself, collapsed on the ground, her face as red as a tomato. This sight was something that Mikado had never seen before.

“N-No...I can’t...I’ll faint...I have to bite my tongue and die...!”

“Why!? We have to get back!”

“It’s because Kitamikado-san said something outrageous like that! So unfair! S-Something about my smile being so c-cute!” Kisa forced the words out of her mouth, hugging her knees as she was still collapsed on the floor.

Now the two of them were riddled with wounds. Both Mikado and Kisa wouldn’t be able to take anymore attacks.

“For now...let’s finish eating...”

“Y-Yes...”

Nodding to each other, they continued with their dinner, not speaking a word. Although they didn’t explicitly agree on it, they both knew that it was time for a truce. If they continued to attack each other like this, they wouldn’t leave unscathed. Around the time the food was finished, the sun had fallen and the sky had turned a

deep blue. Both Kisa and Mikado let out a satisfied sigh and put down the leaves that acted as dishes.

“Moving any more than this probably won’t work. If only there was a place to rest around here...” Mikado muttered to himself and Kisa grew a bit watery-eyed.

“W-With that, you mean a...hotel?”

“I doubt that there is one...or is there?”

“O-Of course not...I’m sorry, I just panicked a bit...”

“I-I see...”

That awkward atmosphere from before still wasn’t gone.

“This island doesn’t have any predators, right? If it does, then the night might become dangerous.”

Kisa put one thinger on her mouth, and thought.

“I wonder...Before, they wanted to break the balance of the ecosystem here with an experiment, so they let in a lot of animals, but I don’t remember much...”

“Well, leaving aside the reason why that experiment took place, that explains why there are so many rich ingredients here.”

On top of that, animals that you normally wouldn’t see in Japan were roaming freely here and the scenery was more akin to what Mikado had seen of America.

“By the way, if this experiment turned out to be a success, there was a plan to tilt the ecosystem of Japan as a whole, but suddenly prehistoric reptiles—”

“I just said I wouldn’t ask for details!”

“Listen, will you!? Once you eventually become my slave, you will have to help out with the jobs of the Nanjou Family! The more you hear now, the easier it will be later!”

“That’s one more reason I won’t listen now! I don’t want to be tainted in the color of your Nanjou Family!”

Mikado closed off his ears with the palms of his hand. It’s true that he loved Kisa and that he wanted her to become a part of the Kitamikado Family, but it’d be troublesome if he was pulled into the darkness that the Nanjou Family emitted. In response, Kisa gave a faint giggle.

“Really, I’m just joking. If Japan fell to ruin because the ecosystem was destroyed, the Nanjou Family would be just as troubled. This island was just used to help endangered species copulate to sell them.”

“Then...Well...that’s better...?”

Mikado found himself wondering if that was any better than their other plan. That being said, more and more information that Mikado never expected to hear from the Nanjou Family daughter’s mouth kept leaking.

“Anyway, since we don’t know what kind of animals are living on this island, we have to look for a safe place to sleep.”

“Yes. If possible, I’d like to take a shower and a bath as well.”

“I don’t think that’s going to happen.”

After finishing their dinner, Mikado and Kisa stepped out of the shadow of the big tree. They carefully made their way through the dark forest where any sort of insect could suddenly jump at them. With only the moonlight illuminating their way, Mikado had no other choice but to use the light of his smartphone, even though it drained the battery. Kisa tumbled over a root several times before pushing herself up, holding her ankle. Mikado tried to lend her a hand, but she just shook it away out of pride.

The night went on, until they finally arrived at a moderately sized cave. After checking that there wasn’t some wild beast housed in the depths of the cave, they built a small fence at the entrance and prepared a small open-air bonfire, gaining at least some safe space.

Putting some thorns around the fence, they lit up the inside with light so that beasts wouldn't dare to approach. Once all these preparations were over, the two of them let out a long sigh and sank onto the ground. After all this hard work, both of them were tired to the bone. They rested their backs against the wall, stretching out their legs.

"This sure isn't the greatest place to sleep...we should have gathered more grass while the sun was still up..."

"I'm sorry...It's all because I took you with me..." Kisa muttered with her head hanging low.

"No, I don't mind that much. I was trained to sleep outside like this. Just, I felt bad for you having to sleep outside."

"I-I'm fine. Rather, I'm actually enjoying this."

"Eh? Why?"

"That's..."

Kisa fidgeted with her fingers as she grew quiet. The light of the bonfire illuminated her slightly flushed face, making her gestures look even more lovable. Her lips were tightly pressed together and she glanced at Mikado from time to time. Just from that, he had no way to guess what she was thinking. Just, her tension was directly transmitted over to Mikado, making him unable to calm down as well. And then, she finally made up her mind...

"U-Um...It's cold, so...can we...sleep next to each other...to warm up?"

It was a husky, shaky voice. An expression that barely hid her embarrassment. This sneak attack was so effective against Mikado's guard that he couldn't hold back a scream.

".....Huh?!"

"Ah, if you don't like it, then that's fine! And this doesn't mean that I am yearning for you or anything! Just as a substitute for a blanket, so to speak! That's all...no deeper meaning to it!" Kisa frantically waved



her hands, trying to deliver an explanation.

“W-Well, keeping ourselves warm might be essential...”

“Right?! Kitamikado-san doesn’t want to catch a cold either, so we have to work together! Not like there’s any deeper meaning to it though!”

“Yeah, no deeper meaning to that...None at all!” Mikado declared.

There were actually more deeper meanings that you could count, but things would be easier if he just went along with her talk. After all, if Kisa asked for that, there is no way that Mikado could decline.

“T-Then...if you’d excuse me...”

“Y-Yeah...”

Kisa brought her body closer to Mikado. Their shoulders came into contact, making Mikado’s heart almost leap out of this chest. Their distance was close enough that her breath was almost directly transmitted to him. Her sweet scent and the soft touch of her long hair, Kisa’s body temperature...No, the pulse of her very existence, was directly thumping on his skin. Both Mikado and Kisa, their bodies now intertwined almost, gazed at the bonfire.

“H-Hey...are you...nervous?”

“Well...yeah.”

He couldn’t deny it. Even if he tried to, it would be easy to see through as a lie. That’s how strong Mikado’s heart was beating and their distance was close enough for them both to know about their respective heartbeats.

“I’m glad...I would have been frustrated if it was just me...”

Mikado was unable to directly look at her relieved expression. He was too flustered at the reality that she was nervous. Naturally, that didn’t mean that Mikado was anyone special and probably only showed that she wasn’t used to this much contact with the opposite sex. Even so, he couldn’t help but get his hopes up, possibly exactly

because he had fallen for her this badly. The sound of the wood of the bonfire crackling, as well as the insects outside, filled the silence. The night was cold, but Mikado's body was burning hot.

"I...don't feel like I can sleep like this." Kisa muttered.

"...Same here."

Even though he should be tired, Mikado's eyes were wide open.

"...Liar."

Putting some more wood onto the bonfire, Kisa puffed out her cheeks in a pouting manner. Mikado was lying on the ground in a big 大 shape, looking so comfortable that you wouldn't think he was stranded on a deserted island.

"You're sound asleep, aren't you? I feel like an idiot for being so nervous."

While voicing her complaints, Kisa pushed her finger into Mikado's cheek. Although it was stiffer than her little sister's, it still felt pretty good. Normally never showing any weakness, Mikado being in this defenseless sleeping state in front of her, gave her an immense sense of superiority. And then, Mikado rolled over, clinging even closer to Kisa. But even so, he showed no signs of waking up. On the contrary, he started sleep-talking comfortably.

"Nan...jou...I have as much food as you want...so don't hold back..."

Apparently, he was even working on their survival in his dreams. His hands were formed into fists and he was sweating ever so slightly.

"...Well, you can't help it this time. You've been working hard for my sake after all..." Kisa smiled.

It probably didn't matter if it was Kisa herself or not. As soon as there was someone close to Mikado in distress, he would come to help them no matter what...and that is exactly what Kisa loved about him. Even though she was planning on using the suspension bridge to settle this once and for all, after walking around on this island, it was herself that took insane amounts of damage and not losing her mind

took all she had. She enjoyed their time together terrifically and Mikado was even more reliable on this island.

Kisa pushed herself against Mikado some more, laying down right next to him. There were a lot of bumps and it was not the perfect ground to sleep on, but even so, it felt a thousand times better than her bed at home.

“If he’s sleeping that soundly...he won’t wake up...right...?”

Kisa slowly approached Mikado’s face. She had been holding herself back all this time, but even she had her limits. Her time together with him was like a heavenly hell.

“A bit...should be fine, right...?”

Making excuses to herself, Kisa’s lips approached Mikado’s. The sound of her beating heart grew louder and she had problems breathing. Rather, she was about to collapse from the tension. Their distance was close enough for their lips to touch.

“I-I can’t...!”

At the very last second, Kisa pulled herself back and instead rested her head on his chest. She thought of stealing his first kiss now while she could, but she didn’t have the courage for that. She was so nervous that her body wouldn’t move forward, even if she wanted it to. She was too scared, thinking about what would happen if Mikado actually woke up. At the same time, the person in question continued to sleep away. He paid no mind whatsoever to the maiden’s heart.

“Hurry...and take the initiative yourself.” Kisa muttered, her head still resting on Mikado’s chest.

Kisa let out a long yawn. Walking along a canyon, Mikado worriedly asked a question.

“...You okay? You seem like you’re lacking some sleep.”

“Whose fault do you think that is?” Kisa threw Mikado a light glare.

“Sorry. It must have been cold since I wasn’t cuddling you, right?”

“Of course it was cold. But don’t worry, I was properly clinging to you in order to stay warm.”

“I-I see...”

“Indeed! It’s because you just fell asleep on your own! After that, I wasn’t able to get one wink of sleep!” Kisa complained as she pointed at Mikado with her index finger.

“...Makes me remember that opera with the ‘None shall sleep song’...”

“To win the game of guessing the prince’s name and be freed from the marriage, Princess Turandot told everyone single resident of the country to not fall asleep, and instead look for the name of the prince<sup>1</sup>...that was the gist of it, right? ...Somehow...”

“It feels like it’s pretty similar to us.”

“...Yes.” Kisa nodded along.

—How did that opera end again...?

Mikado was searching through his memories. However, no matter how hard he tried to remember it, the ending never came to him. Still, it probably wasn’t a bad ending.

Arriving at a river, Mikado grabbed a small basket knit from vines and set foot into the water. Inside the clear water, he saw the small fish swimming around energetically.

“You’re going to fish with that garbage basket?” Kisa tilted her head.

“Can’t you phrase that a bit more kindly...? It took me like 30 minutes to make this.”

“Excuse me, I went too far. You’re going to fish with that unfortunate basket?”

“That didn’t change much!”

That being said, Kisa probably didn’t have any ill intentions saying

that. She was only watching over Mikado, slightly puzzled. There was no other choice but for Mikado to restore his honor by showing results. He crouched down, pushing the basket into the water. Observing the swimming patterns of the fish and calculating their next route—

“...Got you!”

Mikado quickly lifted up the basket. The surface of the water danced and splashed up. The fish that were too late to escape were now flapping up and down inside the basket.

“Wow! Amazing! You did it, Kitamikado-san! You really managed to catch some fish!”

“It’s a simplified version of net fishing. Without any thread or needle here, this is the most efficient method.”

Receiving honest words of praise was the greatest feeling for a man. Kisa quickly took off her shoes and socks, and tapped through the water towards Mikado, her pure white legs shining even more as the sunlight hit them.

“Let me try that as well! If Kitamikado-san can do it, I’m sure I can as well!”

“You don’t have to!”

“Just let me! Come on! In return, I’ll give you the last 50 years of my life span!”

“That’s a bit much for payment!”



But, seeing how enthusiastic and cute Kisa was, Mikado couldn't say no. The basket had gotten soaked with water, becoming significantly heavier, but Kisa still crouched down and pushed it underwater again. Now she was on stand-by, waiting for the fish around her to

return. Because she was leaning forward ever so slightly, her thighs were revealed beneath her skirt. On top of that, her soft, almost transparently white skin, played with Mikado's reason yet again. Unable to bear this sight, he had to avert his gaze.

—Ahh, the sky is so blue today...

Mikado was thinking to himself, as he tried to escape reality. To be honest, being stranded on a deserted island with the person you fell for, it was only a matter of time until his reason wouldn't be able to hold out.

"H-Hey...Kitamikado-san. When should I pull the basket up...?"

But when the girl asked in an unsure manner, Mikado had to look towards her again. Maybe because she was so focussed on it, she didn't even realize that that skirt of hers was getting slightly drenched.

"Give them time to move together as a group again and aim for the time when they let their guard down the most, namely when they start swimming.

"...I see, so you aim for when their guard is at its lowest...When their guard is at its lowest..."

Kisa's skirt, while she was busy mumbling to herself, was slowly but steadily moving further upwards revealing more and more of her thighs. She was indeed letting down her guard more than the fish she was aiming for.

—If it wasn't me, someone else would be aiming for you right now!

Mikado wanted to scream out at the top of his lungs, but he might get ridiculed for sexual harassment.

"Eiii!"

Timing it with her scream, Kisa quickly raised up the basket at full force. Following that was the splashing of water, and...No fish inside! Instead, the fish were quickly swimming past her pure white legs, escaping from that spot.

“Huh?! That’s weird...”

Kisa challenged them again.

“Again?!”

“No way! Impossible!”

“Why?! Even though Kitamikado-san managed to do it?!”

“...The world...is twisted...!”

She repeated the process again and again, but the fish were always too quick for Kisa. Although her brains might push her to the top of the entire country, her athletic abilities were far from prodigal. Mikado wasn’t able to keep watching and called out to Kisa.

“Nanjou...Should we switch?”

“No! I’d be way too frustrated if I couldn’t do it!”

Pushing herself with teary eyes was very much like Kisa. Losing against someone from the Kitamikado Family must greatly hurt the successor of the Nanjou family’s pride. However when the sun reached its zenith... Kisa still hadn’t found any success in her war and was now lying face up on a nearby rock, breathing roughly. Next to her was Mikado with a great number of fish lying in the basket.

“I-It was unexpectedly difficult... What a shame... If I had a bit more stamina, I would have been able to catch a hundred-fold the amount that Kitamikado-san had...”

“What’s that? Is it the howling of a loser that I hear...?”

Mikado was fed-up ever so slightly. Then again, this was just like Kisa.

“Still, you really have amazing survival skills, Kitamikado-san. Wouldn’t you be able to survive on your own on this island?”

“Well, I might be able to.” Mikado muttered, receiving an honest gaze from Kisa.



“Hey...if it came down to it...should we just live here...?”

Kisa lifted her upper body and stared at Mikado. Her words transmitted a certain feeling of honesty and seriousness.

“Eh...?”

“What...if, you know? If we stayed here...we wouldn’t be related to the Nanjou and Kitamikado Families anymore... And not with the love game... Just...forever, like this...”

Being able to stay together forever. That’s probably what Kisa was playing at, Mikado thought. That might be just Mikado’s own interpretation, his own self-confidence playing up again. However... she was right, just staying here with the two of them meant that there was no reason to hold back anymore or think about their boundaries and familial rivalry.

“Are you...fine with staying on this island forever?”

“That might...not be...a bad idea...”

Kisa’s body was wavering. She collapsed back on the rock, lifting up one hand. That way of collapsing wasn’t normal. Like all her strength had left her body.

“Hey...you okay?”

“I-I’m...fine...My body just feels a bit hot...and cold...”

Her face was burning red, while her slender body was shaking. Something was off. Mikado got a bad feeling, and carefully put the palm of his hand on her forehead.

Hot. Burning hot.

“Not good... Since when?”

“The day before yesterday... But...I’m fine...” A feeble voice leaked out of Kisa’s mouth.

She certainly didn’t look fine in the slightest. A survival lifestyle in

the wild for a girl that was used to Japan's normal school life was too much, Mikado should have guessed. Sleeping, eating and moving in this situation and environment was way too hard on her.

"...Settling in here won't work, huh?"

Mikado crouched down in front of Kisa and pointed his back at her. He had to get her to a doctor as fast as possible.

"Eh, what...?" Kisa was perplexed.

"You probably can't even walk anymore, right? I'll carry you on my back."

"...This won't turn into a debt?" She asked, worried.

"Of course not. Not after all that's happened."

Mikado returned a kind smile, to which Kisa slowly lifted up her upper body and carefully pushed herself towards Mikado's back. Feeling two soft bulges pressed against his back, Mikado felt his face grow hotter. The soft feeling of her skin, the soothing cold sensation of her legs, every single sense was being assaulted by Kisa's presence. Desperately trying to quell the desires welling up inside of him, Mikado pushed Kisa up on his back.

"First we have to gather some wood and grill these fish. When you're feeling under the weather, eating is the best thing you can do."

"Kitamikado-san...you seem to be made for the household. A housewife in her thirties?"

"Leave me alone."

Hissing back at Kisa's joke, Mikado walked along the riverside.

Kisa's body was so light Mikado started to worry about her even more, but carrying someone on one's back can still be tiring if done for extended periods of time. After all, this island had a very peculiar topography, with many hills to cross and valleys to go down which amounted to a great amount of work for his legs especially. Then, the nights were freezing cold, while the noons were crushingly hot.

Although he had been trained for his, even the legs of the successor of the Kitamikado Family would eventually cry out in anguish. His lack of proper nutrition and sleep certainly didn't help with that. However, stopping here wasn't an option.

In two days, the day of the engagement arrived. And that wasn't all, judging that Kisa's condition was worsening, Mikado realised he had to get her to a hospital as quickly as possible.

"Kitamikado-san... Are you okay...? You seem really tired..." Kisa let out a weak, husky voice, still on his back.

Her body was burning hot. Walking down a mountain riddled with leaves, Mikado laughed.

"You're worrying about the wrong person here. Just go back to sleep."

"But..."

Mikado felt his chest tighten, seeing how feeble the normally arrogant Kisa had gotten.

"I was trained to work normally with a 40° fever, so something like this won't affect me—"

Before he could finish his sentence, his feet slipped, not having had enough steady ground. Their two bodies were about to slide downwards. Kisa's shriek rang out, when Mikado quickly went to grab at a nearby branch. His skin was rubbed against it violently and the smell of burning skin was rising up. Intense pain, as well as a piercing protuberance assaulted his hand and yet, Mikado didn't let go, still tightly clinging onto the branch and Kisa's body.

"Haaa...Haaa..."

His beating heart was starting to hurt and a long sigh escaped his lips. To make sure that Kisa's body was always safe, Mikado had been doing everything he could, but his body was nearing its limit as well. And Kisa, despite feeling this weak, didn't miss that.

"H-Hey...how about we take a quick break? I want to rest a bit as

well...”

“Y-Yeah...”

Being appealed to by Kisa, Mikado nodded along. Though he didn't care too much for his own body, he didn't want to make Kisa suffer more than necessary. Fixing their posture was important as well. Moving through the mountain-range wrapped in fog, they found rocks that were sticking out like a roof and evacuated there. After a bit, the rain started pouring down in torrents. Kisa laid down, not caring too much about the wet ground beneath her. Though Mikado was worried that her fever might go up because of that, he couldn't come up with any other option. Both the successor of the Kitamikado Family, destined to be Japan's guiding light, as well as the successor of the Nanjou Family, meant to rule Japan from the shadows... were nothing more than normal human beings, who would grow weak and feeble depending on the circumstances.

“If you keep on carrying me...you won't make it in time for your engagement ceremony...” Kisa muttered.

“...No, I'll definitely make it in time. I still haven't gotten serious.”

“That's a lie. Just watching you makes it obvious. You're getting more worn out by the second. Your walking is getting slower and you can't muster up any strength...”

“.....”

Mikado couldn't deny that. To be honest, he had trouble just maintaining consciousness right now. He wanted to rest somewhere with a comfortable bed. His whole body was moving with that desire.

“...I'm sorry...troubling you like this...I just...didn't want to see you get engaged, no matter what... So that's why I pulled you into this mess...” Kisa muttered, casting her gaze downward.

“Don't sweat it. I don't mind it that much.” Mikado shrugged.

“...Really, just leave me alone. You'll definitely make it in time.”

“No, I'll take you with me at all costs. As if I could just leave you here

on this mountain.”

Taking out a handkerchief from his pocket, Mikado went to softly dry Kisa’s hair as well as her face, devoid of any color and her blue trembling lips. The girl didn’t try to resist, and just spoke out in a weak voice.

“Why...are you going this far? I’m always...always causing nothing but trouble for you... I forcefully got you into this love game, so why...?”

“That’s...”

Because I love you. Mikado couldn’t voice those feelings that were bottled up inside of him. The rule of the game. Voicing your affection would result in defeat. The loser would become the other person’s slave, abandoning one’s own family. If they were normal high school students, he could confess, receive a simple yes or no, and that would be the end of it. But not for them. Openly confessing one’s love was not allowed.

“Say, Nanjou... Why are you that keen on stopping me from getting engaged?”

Mikado could only turn the question around.

“Uumm... After all, I...” Kisa shut her mouth.

Maybe it was because of the cold, but her body started shaking even more furiously. Only silence reigned between them. They gazed at each other directly in the eye, unable to say anything. They both felt like something was going on between them, but they both didn’t know the identity of that. Mikado took a deep breath and hugged Kisa. Although her body shook slightly in surprise, she quickly returned the hug, wrapping her arms around Mikado’s back. Her body was so small, so fragile. But, all the cold that plagued them suddenly vanished and they felt their bodies being filled with warmth. And at the same time, Mikado yet again steeled his determination to definitely make this girl his. No matter how difficult it may be because of their family’s standing, no matter how much the love game was making things difficult for him, he wanted this small

and yet immensely precious life, right next to him. He wanted her to walk next to him, freely, with a smile.

“...Once we catch our breath, let’s leave. Together.”

Mikado muttered that, still tightly embracing the girl, who returned a nod.

Thunder rang out. After the strong downpour, the solid ground had turned into mush. Inside this storm, where your field of view was more limited than in the forest at night, Mikado mustered up all the strength he had left in him and moved west. Kisa’s energy, still resting on his back, was gradually getting weaker, as the pressure of her arms clinging to Mikado began to lessen. To make sure that she wouldn’t fall off his back, he held onto her tightly. Though, being drenched by the rain, her legs were slippery, making it very difficult.

“Cold...” Kisa muttered in a distant voice.

She didn’t even have the strength to shake anymore and just rested on Mikado’s back, motionless.

“Just a bit more. In a second, we’ll be at the residence, so it’ll be fine.”

Nothing that looked like said residence was in sight, but Mikado had to find some way to put hope into the girl. She gave no response. Instead, her breathing grew weaker by the second. A cold feeling wrapped around Mikado. It wasn’t because of the rain, nor because of the temperature, it was pure fear. Fear that the girl’s final spark of life might have vanished. Before Mikado realized it, he called out at the top of his lungs.

“Kisa!!!”

“Fuah!?” Kisa’s body shook.

“If you’re awake, then respond! We’re almost there, so keep yourself awake!”

Mikado was screaming in rage. If he let her sleep now, he felt like something bad might happen. His instincts were telling him to keep

her awake at all costs.

“H-Hey...did you just call me Kisa...!?” Kisa’s voice was panicking ever so slightly.

“Shut up! Where’s your response!?”

“...Yes!” Kisa frantically clung to Mikado.

Faintly, strength had returned to her body. For some reason, a fire started to burn inside Mikado as well and the heavy downpour felt like nothing but a normal shower. With Kisa on his back, he started running. West, only west. Cutting through the rain, not thinking about anything but that. As if a source of infinite strength ran through his body, his legs showed no signs of giving in.

Who cares if Kisa is the successor of his arch nemesis? Who cares if she is his enemy during the love game that would decide their future. What does it matter now? For the person he loved more than anyone else, Mikado ran. His tired muscles only moved through pure willpower now. And finally, the scent of sea water was carried to his nose.

“This is...”

What flew into his view was the coast line, the lapping waves, an old abandoned dock, and an inorganic grey building. Rather than a private residence...

“Isn’t this a research lab!?”

Mikado remembered that Kisa had spoken about an experiment taking place on this island.

“It is a deserted laboratory, but it can be used as shelter... The operating tables can be used as beds and the cultivation rooms of the clones can be used as baths...”

“That doesn’t sound too comfortable!”

“Don’t worry... There’s an incinerator that can remove any proof of dead bodies...”

“I worry even more now!”

Standing in front of the building, Mikado frantically tried to open the door, but to no avail.

“Where’s the key?!”

“The one responsible for this facility probably has it...”

“And where are they?!”

“They all disappeared...even their families...”

“Just how dark can this whole thing get?!”

Mikado kicked against a glass window nearby at full force. Maybe because the building was pretty old, it broke pretty easily and Mikado jumped inside. That very second, a siren started ringing.

‘Intruders spotted! Intruders spotted! Preparing for interception! Guarantee the safety of all inhabitants! Until the danger is taken care off, protect yourselves and your belongings at all costs!’

An announcer’s voice rang out, while red light flickered everywhere. Mikado collapsed forward, dropping onto his knees.

“Strains and heatstroke, together with a light viral infection. With the right antibiotics and a week of rest, you’ll be back to normal no doubt. So, please don’t force yourself any more than necessary...”

Leaving those words behind, the doctor stepped out of the room. This was a hospital on the mainland, a room reserved for special people. It was a hospital that many celebrities were using, but the management was led by the Nanjou Family apparently. That being said, this one room looked more like a suite, rather than a hospital room. Kisa was lying on the bed. Needles were protruding from her slender arms and her hair and skin were already cleaned properly by the nurse. Her color had returned a great deal compared to what it was back at the island, but she was still weak. Next to her was Mikado, watching over her, as well as the captain of the Nanjou Family’s private defence force. She was a stylish woman and very charming, but her eyes were



sharp.

“To think that the stinking brat from the Shitkado Family would be saving Kisa-sama like this. Did you realise just leaving her to die would be bringing an end to the Nanjou Family?”

“...As if I would. I cannot allow Kisa to die.” Mikado responded in a heavy tone.

Being in the enemy’s lair, not to mention with a dangerous individual like her, ready to kill him at all times by his side, he couldn’t let down his guard in the slightest.

“Hmmm... Is that so...?” The captain shrugged, after giving Mikado a scrutinising glare. “Both you and Kisa-sama sure have taken the terribly crappy and dangerous way I see. Well, I feel like shit will hit the fan soon, so try your best, I guess.”

Giving a rather unladylike, sharp-tongued goodbye, the woman stepped out into the hallway. The sound of the door being auto-locked resounded and her heavy footsteps grew more distant. Once it was just the two of them, Kisa feebly spoke up.

“...Thank you, Kitamikado-san. I’ll definitely repay this debt.”

“I’m not expecting anything like that. I was still enjoying myself in my own way.” Mikado forced out a smile, reminiscing about all the struggles he had gone through and his still incomplete recovery.

He didn’t want to worry Kisa more than necessary and showing his own exhaustion would make him seem uncool, so he played the straight man now. Hearing Mikado’s response, Kisa took a deep breath and spoke up again.

“It’s fine, now. You can still make it to the engagement ceremony... Go.”

“Y-Yeah.”

Mikado checked the time on his phone. If he took the final bullet train, he would barely make it in time for the ceremony. Although he was unsure how to explain his sudden vanishing and the late arrival

to his own family, as well as the Shizukawa Family, his duty of being present was the most important. Even so... Mikado was hesitating. Something inside him was stopping him from leaving the poor and weakened Kisa all alone. After all that had happened, he was fully aware that Kisa was just like any other girl who you could find everywhere.

“Then...see you at school.”

Feeling hesitant, Mikado forcefully turned his back towards the bed, about to walk away. When suddenly, he felt something pulling on his shirt. Turning around, Kisa had stretched out her arm from the bed, tightly gripping Mikado's shirt. Her eyes were watery, as she glared at him.



“So you don’t want me to go?”

As Mikado slowly asked, Kisa shook her head. However, her hand showed no signs of letting him go. Like a small puppy, about to be

abandoned, she pursed her lips, as she pouted up at Mikado. Seeing that expression and her wordless appeal, no man would be able to leave. How could he leave the girl he loved behind, when she showed him that saddened expression?

“...Alright, I'll stay here. Until you're back to normal.”

“Is that...fine...?” Kisa carefully asked.

“Well...I gotta finish what I started and look after you.”

Mikado carefully took Kisa's hand away from his shirt and put it down on the blanket, then grabbed a seat on a chair next to the bed. A calm silence ensued. Only the sound of the A/C resounded softly in the room. Although this wasn't the deserted island, nobody would interrupt them here. No signs of the usual family war plagued them.

“Thank you...Mikado.”

Hiding half of her beet red face beneath the blanket, Kisa muttered in an embarrassed manner.

“...Don't mind it.”

Mikado felt the same, as he averted his eyes to gaze at the scenery outside.

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[1](#) Kinda summary of the final opera 'Turandot' of Giacomo Puccini, first shown in 1926



# Epilogue

This classroom of Sousei Academy was enveloped in the morning sunlight. Today again, the students were happily exchanging their greetings with fresh and unwrinkled shirts, their white teeth shining as brightly as ever. Their daily youth was on display in its full glory. However, there was a certain Mikado mixed in there, who was clearly different from them.

“Haaaa...Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa...”

He was busy wasting his youth away by sighing all over the place. Even though he was supposed to be the shining light that was the Kitamikado Family’s successor, tasked with guiding Japan to new glory, he was wrapped in darkness.

“Come on, don’t be so depressed about it! What does it matter if your engagement didn’t work out!? There’s always next time! Next time, I say!” Kisa said, clearly pleased with the situation.

“You sure are happy about this...”

“I’m feeling exceedingly good today! I feel like I can fly, I say!”

“And energetic as well...”

“Because you’ve been by my side all this time, Mikado! Without realizing that this was my plan all along! How could I not laugh at this, Mikado?!”

And so on, she announced, ready to jump up and start dancing. Naturally, Mikado was well aware that those probably weren’t her true feelings. After all, he had seen the meek and feeble Kisa, back in the hospital room and hadn’t forgotten about the time they spent on the deserted island either. No, how could he forget?

In the end, the fact that the successor of the Kitamikado Family went missing was never reported to the Shizukawa Family. To escape any painful rumours that would hurt them, it was seen to it that Mikado

had never taken part in the ceremony and the head of the Shizukawa Family cancelled any plans for the engagement party in rage. Mikado was scolded harshly by the Kitamikado Head of course and questioned for several days; where he had been and what he had been doing. Naturally, he couldn't reveal that he was actually abducted by Kisa, so he had to keep quiet through the lie detector and brainwave scan.

"But... I'm happy that you treasure me this much."

As she muttered, Kisa's true feelings leaked out for a second.

"...Eh?"

Mikado's eyes opened wide. In response, Kisa frantically waved her hands.

"W-When I say happy, I don't mean that in a weird way, okay? S-See, I just mean that you've presented to me a deep faithfulness, so that made me happy! It's not like my heart was beating like crazy or anything!" Or so she said, but her face was beet red.

"A-Ahh, I see."

"Y-Yeah..."

"Is that so...?"

"It is..."

A weird silence filled the void between them. She was the same Kisa as always, but at the same time, she was different. She was calling Mikado by his first name now and their sense of distance was closer than before. After that incident on the island, their relationship was changing. As the two of them were nervously fidgeting, not trying to make eye contact, a loud voice, belonging to a person that was chronically unable to read the room resounded.

"Kisa-chan! Mikado-kun! Why were you away from school this long?! Did something happen between the two of you?!"

Readying the lens of her camera like a weapon, she pointed it in

Mikado's and Kisa's direction. Feeling like this would turn into something troublesome, Mikado shrugged his shoulders and confessed.

"Just a coincidence. Seems like we both got hit by influenza."

"That's impossible! I looked through the cracks in your database, but I didn't find anything there that said influenza!"

"Ugh...!"

Mikado didn't expect her to research this far, digging his own grave when he lied.

"Now, go on and confess! What have the two of you been doing?! Were you abducted?! Were you having a battle to the death?! Tell me!"

"Let's go over there, Kawaraya-san. I will give you a proper explanation." Kisa grabbed Kokage's shoulder.

"Really? Thank you very much!" Kokage didn't doubt this for a second.

Kisa gave Mikado a wink, saying leave it to me. It'd be troublesome for her as well if what happened on that island was leaked, she must be trying to convince her some way or another. Strategy and illusion were Nanjou Family's specialty. And, as she took Kokage with her, Kisa walked past Mikado, closed in on his ear and whispered.

"From today on, our game will restart. I'll be attacking you at full force again."

Her voice sounded cheerful, like she was looking forward to that development.

"...Yeah."

Mikado nodded with a calm smile.

On the luxurious dome-like bed in her private room, Kisa was energetically conversing with Mizuki.



“And then, and then! Mikado carried me on his back, running through the rain! He was so, soooooooooo cool! He’s the perfect man, I say! His soul is pure and confident, he doesn’t back down at all and he was protecting me with everything he had! Ahhhhhhhh, he’s so kind! I love you! Mikado I love you! Marry me!”

It was a completely one-sided conversation. She had been going on with this talk for nearly three hours since she had come home. And this had happened every day after she was released from the hospital.

“This...this isn’t my Onee-chan at all...”

Mizuki was shaking in fear, terrified at how Kisa was acting. Before, she would never openly talk about her feelings towards Mikado, not even in front of her little sister, but now the same stories were hammered into Mizuki day after day, it was like she was a different person.

“What is that tedious expression about!? Those aren’t nearly enough of the reasons why Mikado is so wonderful! You’ll be joining me for another 5 hours!” Kisa said energetically, as she pointed at Mizuki.

“I know that Mikado-kun is an amazing person! So please spare my life!” Mizuki was scared for her wellbeing.

Because she knew very well, Nanjou Kisa could be a horrifyingly scary person. The successor of the Nanjou Family was decorating herself with knowledge, cruelty and pride to such an extent that she was the greatest genius ever since the family’s founding, everyone had great expectations for her. And this very older sister was about to go crazy because of one single boy, Kitamikado Mikado. She had turned into a maiden of love, unable to keep her rational thinking, only guided by her feelings.

And all it took was one Kitamikado Mikado. He was indeed, amazing. Even though he was supposed to be Kisa’s prisoner on the deserted island, the girl herself came back this crazy about him.

“Also, Onee-chan? Why did you fall in love with Mikado-kun anyway?”

“That’s...before...”

“Before...?”

“N-Nothing at all! A lot happened, that’s all!” Kisa averted her eyes with a beet red face.

—Oh really now...? That makes me feel even more interested in Mikado-kun...

Being forced to listen to Kisa’s talk every day, Mizuki couldn’t help but think that way. She wanted to know more about Mikado. Check for herself, rather than just believing her sister’s words. That feeling grew stronger and stronger.

“Hey...Onee-chan. I’d like to ask something.”

“What?”

“Your love game with Mikado-kun... Do you think I could join in on that?”

As Kisa showed a terrified expression, Mizuki just smiled faintly.

Inside the main residence of the Shizukawa Family, inside Mikado’s fiancée, Rinka’s room. There, the aura that the room was submerged in was greatly different from a normal girl’s. Countless posters were decorating the wall, all of them showing Mikado in high resolution. Filling the shelves present in her room were precise figurines of Mikado. Positioned on the girly bed, a full-body sized hugging pillow, with a picture of Mikado printed on it. This room was indeed filled with various Kitamikado Mikado goods.

“Ahhh...Mikado-sama...you’re as dignified as always... Even today, I cannot get enough of you...”

A student of the pure and proper Shirase Girls Academy and the daughter of the Shizukawa Conglomerate, Rinka, was breathing heavily... as she **licked** one of the Mikado figurines. She was greatly aroused. She was losing herself. She knew herself that she could never show these feelings, no it was shameful to even hold such extreme feelings in the first place, both to her Kouhais at school and

her family, but she couldn't hold them back.

Having finished her daily routine of licking Mikado (Figurine version) over until she was satisfied, Rinka had finally calmed down a bit and put the figurine back onto the shelf. As soon as she managed to get a hold of herself, a depressing reality immediately assaulted her. That was the fact that the person she was longing for so much hadn't appeared at their planned engagement ceremony.

"Mikado-sama... What has happened to you in this one week...?" Rinka muttered, absent-mindedly.

During the time he was away from school, Rinka's rival, Nanjou Kisa, also wasn't present. There was no mistaking it, that the reason for his absence both at school and the ceremony was because of her. But, how did the two of them spend that week? Just thinking about it sent a sharp pain through Rinka's chest.

In the first place, the two of them went to different schools, giving her a significant disadvantage. Mikado and Kisa could stay together throughout the whole day, where there was no place for Rinka. She needed to create an opening. To win in this love game between maidens.

"I will never hand over Mikado-sama. I am the person that loves him the most after all..."

Holding the Mikado hugging pillow close to her chest, Rinka picked up her smartphone.







# Afterword

Hello there, it's Amano Seiju.

This marks a fresh new series at GA Bunko after about a year. What have I been doing during this time? I was writing novels, creating games, building up entire stories from scratch!

2017 was a very active year. I managed to stabilize a new novel series, and had gotten more proficient at making games, so that I would get lots of job offers from game makers. This coming March makes me five years old as a light novel author. I stopped counting my actual age. But anyway, it's all thanks to your continued support that I can write this afterword now.

The other people that have been supporting my endeavors are my editor Usami-sama, and Nakazoe-sama. Naturally, not to forget the beautiful illustrations drawn by none other than Kakao-sensei. And everyone from the editorial department, everyone that was involved in the publishing of this novel. My precious family, always giving me courage and energy. And of course, all my dear readers that have picked up this new novel of mine, I cannot thank you enough.

I am planning to keep the story as interesting as this novel, so please, I hope we can meet each other again. Until then—

The 14th of December, 2017. Amano Seiju.



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